

End of Project Report: SEND Partnership Project 5

September 2018

Developing provision for students at SEN Support who are at risk of exclusion

Rationale

A child or young person who is on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register without an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is over six times more likely to be permanently excluded than a child or young person with no identified SEND (DFE data 2016 – 17). Although the reasons behind these exclusions may be complex and different for each 'SEN Support' child, each school should use its 'best endeavours' to effectively support the child's needs and take these difficulties into account when considering exclusion. For example, an estimated 36% of children and young people with learning disabilities experience mental health problems – this is compared with 8% among children without disabilities (NICE mental health scoping document, 2012).

Nine primary and secondary schools from across West Sussex volunteered to take part in a SEND Partnership Project to develop practice for a SEN Support child who was at risk of exclusion. Each school used relational based approaches and strategies to improve its focus child's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and sense of belonging within the school. It was hoped that this would then lead to a reduction in challenging behaviours, which are often the main cause of exclusions. This project report is written to share the impact that this work has made to the children and schools involved and to provide schools and settings with a range of strategies they may want to try.

Project Activity

During the Summer Term 2018, a series of 4 half day workshops were held on attachment, Theraplay® Informed Practice and sensory approaches. This included activities designed to 'up' and 'down' regulate, to enable the focus child to learn how to self-regulate emotions, and sensory activities to encourage positive touch.

The focus of the workshops was to:

- a) Develop understanding of relationship based approaches

- b) Reflect upon practice with peers and identify good practice techniques that could be applied.

The workshops sessions were planned and led by a Headteacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), and a Local Authority Advisory Teacher. Parent / carer representatives from West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF) also attended the workshops, alongside project school SENCOs or equivalents. This meant that the work was informed by the views of various stakeholders.

Each school was asked to try out some of the practices that had been shared during the training sessions. Each school received some funding towards supply cover to enable staff to attend the workshop and to write up findings as a case study. Parent / carer consent was gained.

Knowing a child's background and family life is essential to helping them - knowing WHY a child behaves in a certain way can enable the right help to be put into place. In recognition of this and the importance of the home / school relationship, all project schools were offered a series of support sessions with an experienced independent Family Link Worker who:

- Worked 1:1 with the identified child within each school on emotional resilience, emotional safety and emotions.
- Supported teachers to understand the attachment needs of the children in their care and how these can be supported in the classroom with practical strategies. Emotional support was also provided to staff to enable them to feel more confident in their practice.
- Families were also offered support, bridging the gap between school and home. This included signposting to other services.

Background of children

All of the children in the case studies (focus child) had lower than average academic achievement and were considered to be 'SEN Support' on the SEND register. None of the case study children had an EHCP or Statement of Educational Need. All children were considered to have some form of social, emotional or mental health difficulty, with the majority demonstrating SEMH behaviours within the home environment. Half of the schools in the project also reported that their focus child had some difficulty with a significant adult relationship within their family.

Although all children are different and react to situations in various ways, some typical behaviours of the focus children were noted, for example:

- Attention seeking: calling out, pretending to trip over.
- Difficulties coping when things didn't go as planned: unable to admit when they have made a mistake or a wrong choice, or walk away when a game gets out of hand.
- The need to be in control: difficulty in following rules, ignoring staff or class instructions, refusal to take part in activities, changes to routine or finding it difficult to accept adult help or changes to routine.
- Challenging or inappropriate behaviour: swearing, biting, throwing, kicking, punching, rocking, pacing.
- Concentration: easily distracted with some tasks; scratching.
- Social difficulties: problems in forming secure relationships with adults and or peers - playtimes often challenging.
- Difficulty regulating emotions: excited, angry, annoyed or irritated.
- Sensory overload: the child may be loud in the classroom and at the same time be sensitive to loud noises.
- Varied home backgrounds: some may have a chaotic home life, be late to school or tired from lack of sleep, whilst others may have very supportive parents who are as concerned as the school.
- Low self-esteem and resilience: child feeling 'not worthy' or making comments such as "I wish I wasn't here".

In working with children and young people who demonstrate these behaviours, it is vital to see their actions as a symptom and not the cause. The children may need to act in a certain way to feel in control, which then helps them to feel safe. They may miss out on what they enjoy, which in turn further reduces their self-confidence and raises anxiety. They often feel blamed for things they have not done. Although each focus child was considered to be 'challenging' and 'at risk of exclusion', each child also displayed huge strengths despite their difficulties. For example, being highly imaginative, creative or succeeding at sports, outdoor or practical activities. They were also often very determined with a great sense of humour. Some of the focus children also appeared happy and incredibly caring. Just imagine how much more they could succeed if their emotional and sensory needs were also met.

Interventions

A range of interventions were discussed and used during this project to support the children and young people.

Sensory Interventions: these can take many forms and include:

❖ The pupil having a **sensory bag / basket, personal to the pupil, with:**

- chewellery
- fiddle pencils
- sensory timer
- squishy balls
- pin art
- thinking putty
- stretchy string
- oil and water timers
- fiddly rings
- stretch toys



Sensory Bag and Resources



Chew Necklaces



Gloop Timer



Spikey Massage Ball

- ❖ Other sensory items include:
 - light up cushion
 - wobble stool
 - kinetic sand and sand pit
 - exercise ball used as a chair
 - wheeled tummy board
 - water beads



Water Beads



Wobble Stool



Kinetic Sand and Sand Pit



“All pupils are enjoying
the sensory equipment
in the classroom”

School SENCo

Schools also found it very insightful to ask **parent / carers** to share with them which sensory resources were used within the **home**. Schools found that replicating some of these resources used at home supported the child's transition into school. During the project, one parent / carer shared her son's sensory resources. Please see below for photo and key.



Photo Key (see previous page).

1) Yoga Mat. Roll child in it like a hot dog, pat them down - it's de-escalating. Good for after school transition home.

2) Cuddle Loop. Good for proprioception, tactile, snug.

www.Spacecraft.co.uk

3) Child's own items - things that make them happy, their choice.

4) Gatwick Assistance Lanyard.

For those with invisible disabilities who need help/awareness when flying
Google 'Hidden Disabilities'

5) Toothbrush

Child may not like brushing teeth but instead want to chew - a toothbrush can be perfect for this.

6) Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS).

This is a travel/personal one. Easy to make and take.

7) Noise makers - good for calming! They can help to vent frustrations but may excite too.

8) Squishies - new craze made of memory foam. Lots of different types- watch for those that may bite/chew though!

9) Activity tracker with alarms you can set which will make their watch vibrate. Remember to go to the toilet/drink water.

10) Chewigem chews www.Chewigem.co.uk

11) Resistance Tunnel to help down regulate and calm.

www.SensoryOwl.co.uk

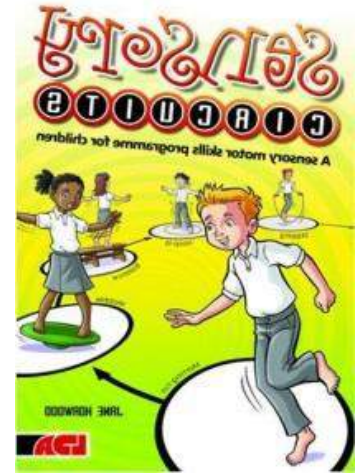
12) Weighted Lap Pad. Many designs, some with finger tracing patterns.

13) Acu Shiatsu Roller Ball Massager. Grounding "Used to calm but we like to roll it on our feet with no socks on." Parent

Sensory Circuits

An example is shown below of how a school has incorporated sensory circuits into the school day.

“Every morning the pupils begin their sensory circuit routines – encouraging the pupils to relax and allow time to digest the day. The equipment in the hall is laid out in sections in order to have alerting, organising and calming areas.



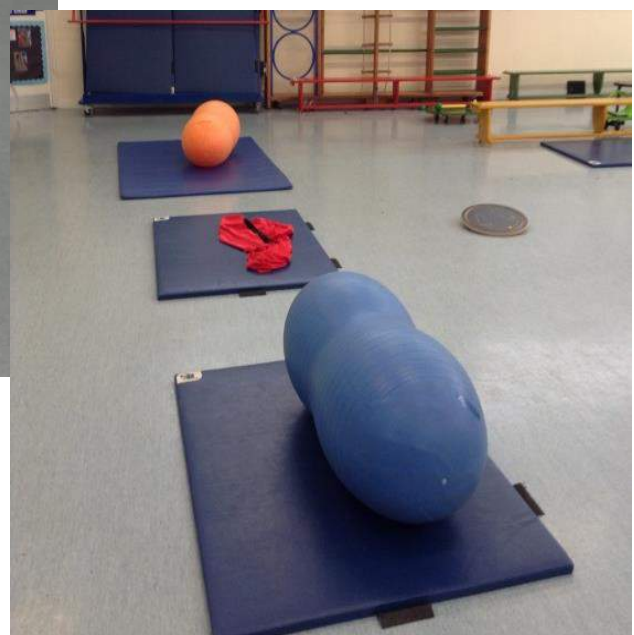
First the pupils enter an 'alerting' area. This is to get a child who is full of energy to focus, and for a pupil that needs a bit of a 'shake-up', to get going in the morning.

After XX minutes of alerting, the pupils then move on to the 'organising' section. This is to help the pupils to organise their body, plan their actions and do more than one thing at a time. The pupils focus on balancing and rolling - using different textured items.

Finally the 'calming area'. The pupils are squashed with big bouncy balls. The pressed sensation helps calm and ground a child.”



“Since the sensory timetable [has been introduced] XX now wants to be in the classroom.”
School view



Sensory breaks - a carefully designed series of physical activities and accommodations tailored to give a pupil the sensory input he/she needs. A sensory break can help pupils get into a "just right" state, which can help them pay attention in school, learn new skills and socialise with other pupils. Sensory breaks can be built in throughout the day. For example:

❖ **Physical breaks** – These can include: a physical activity; going for a walk; carrying out a job for an adult; gardening.

❖ **If the child is experiencing sensory overload: i.e.**

- too noisy – calm time in the tent with craft activities.
- too hot / cold – recognising this and addressing accordingly, e.g. changing layers, extra drink, sitting in shade.
- change of routine – lots of warnings given, recap visual timetable – what is going to happen next and the expectations and rewards.

Emotional Support

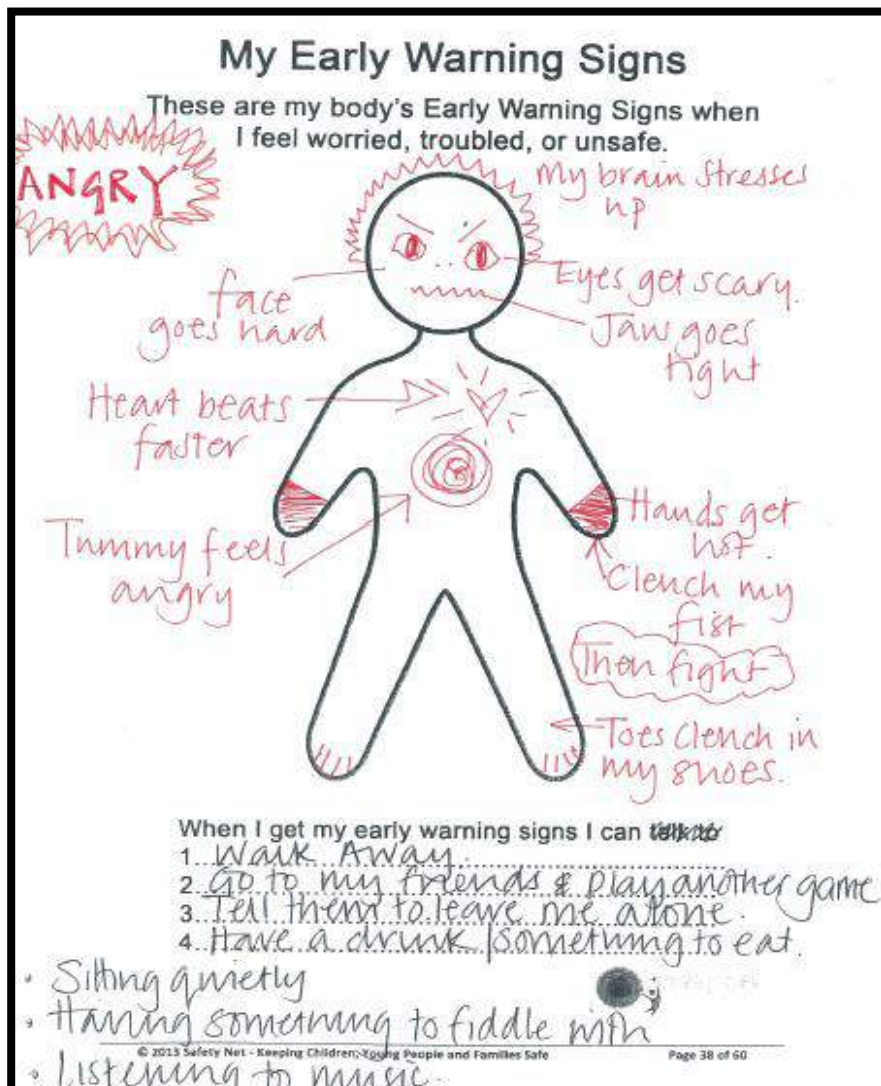
❖ **Emotional overload:**

- identifying issues and incidents both at home (before school) and at school (with other children).
- use of 'I wonder' or 'I imagine' or 'I notice' statements to help recognise how they are feeling – (see appropriate section).
- tired – dialogue with mum about night times and tiredness at school; chill time in the tent to help relax.
- hungry – extra snack breaks built into routine and extra snacks kept in the teacher's cupboard.

❖ **Mindfulness activities** – often led by a Teaching Assistant at the start of the day, after break and lunch. This could be to the whole class. Combining simple relaxation techniques such as deep breathing with positive visual imagery. For example, if on a one to one basis: "Close your eyes and imagine you were focused in class, what would you see/ hear?" There are also some great mindfulness Apps.

❖ **Self-help resources** – such as 'Starving the Gremlin' series and the 'Overcoming ' (for older pupils) series.

- ❖ **Educating pupils on their own mental health** – it is helpful for the pupils to know how their brain works and the key symptoms that they may need support with.



A project activity that helped a focus child to think about the signs of anger and how it made him/her feel. This exercise enabled the member of staff to introduce strategies that could help.

Sleep – some pupils have difficulty sleeping for various reasons. In consultation with parents, a light up pillow was given to a project child for use at home. Relaxing strategies were discussed with parents to establish a routine.

Eating – to increase opportunities for trust and nurturing. Breakfast was provided for the pupil, in a quiet room. Eventually the pupil became more able to communicate his/her feelings. Snacks can also be provided throughout the day.

Designated safe space:

- ❖ allows time out / recovery time with an adult nearby.
- ❖ the pupil can go to this space without losing face or creating more difficulty.
- ❖ all staff need to be aware of this space and encourage the pupil to use it when he/she needs calming.
- ❖ The calming area gives the pupil somewhere to go to when he/she identifies that something is difficult, without creating a distraction or becoming aggressive. If the adult also moves to this area, it can provide a chance to receive 1:1 attention. This could be a space with low lighting in a quiet area of the school or within a classroom.



“I like it in there because it is quiet and safe”

- ❖ a **tent** can be used – this can be set up by the child with a chosen friend each morning.
- ❖ The tent / safe space may have a selection of blankets, cushions, a bean bag, magazines, colouring books and sensory objects. The tent/ safe space needs to be set up where the pupil would like it and to be used as a quiet space. It can also be used for reward times and during break / lunch times – the pupil can go in the tent / safe space with friends during reward time.
- ❖ **Craft activities** – building on the pupil’s strengths, these can be introduced to support calm time. They include: finger crochet; cross stitch; making woollen pom-poms and knitting. The pupil can become an ‘expert’ at these crafts and help their peers, thus developing their sense of self-worth.
- ❖ **Quiet concentration table** – situated on its own, facing away from a stimulating environment.



“ XX is much calmer - they have a tent / wigwam to use”.

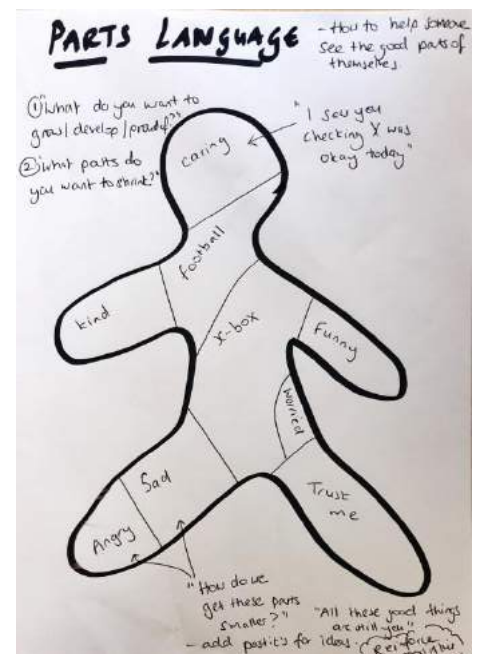
“ Since a ‘cool down’ zone has been introduced XX has not left the classroom, they have become an ‘expert’ in helping others”.

'I wonder'.....statements - Modelling – helps the pupil to name his/her own and others' feelings/reactions; helps the child to interpret others' expressions/reactions; and helps to develop the internal working model which is a pre-requisite of the development of self-regulation.

- ❖ An example of modelling is **Wondering aloud**, for example, "I'm wondering if you are feeling worried, because I noticed that you were frowning like this [show them the expression] when you were looking at your work. Maybe you were thinking this looks hard and I don't know what to do. If I was feeling like that I might think 'I am going to ask Mrs. Smith if she can help me. Why don't we have a look at your work together?'"
- ❖ The important aspect is the "I'm wondering if you were feeling.....because....." as this puts into words emotions and reasons for them that the child might be experiencing. For some children 'wondering aloud' can feel very intrusive and threatening, especially for those with avoidant attachment – in these cases it is possible to wonder aloud about yourself instead "I wonder how I would be feeling if I had just been given X to do? I might be worried...." as this removes the focus from the child but still provides the vocabulary, cause/effect relationship.
- ❖ Alternative open wording could include "I imagine...I notice..."

Parts Language – create 'parts pictures' with the pupil in 1:1 time.

- ❖ Use an outline of a person / draw around the pupil.
- ❖ Use post it notes to describe the parts that make them who they are.
- ❖ Always start with the positives, strengths and likes – come up with these parts together giving examples as you do so. For example, a patient part, a smiley part, a sense of humour part.
- ❖ Move on to the parts that the pupil would rather hide, is embarrassed about or finds difficult to discuss. To do this, start with your own ideas about you so that it doesn't feel too threatening and the task can be normalised. For example, 'I've got a forgetful part.' The pupil might say, 'snatching part, unkind part, sad part'.



- ❖ Use arrows to indicate which parts the pupil wants to increase.
- ❖ Use arrows to indicate which parts the pupil wants to decrease.
- ❖ After doing this exercise the key adult can start to use the language of parts in all interactions with the pupil. For example, 'I can see you're using your snatching part right now. Where's your patient part?'
- ❖ The adult will be supporting the pupil to realise that there are many parts that make them who they are.

Hand of Options – this can be used when the pupil is feeling stressed or has a sense of shame.

- ❖ Talk through five possible motives and intentions that might have been behind whatever has caused the pupil to feel stress or shame.
- ❖ The pupil is likely to have assumed immediately that the other pupil or adult was 'out to get them', to harm them in some way. The 'Hand of Options' helps the pupil to have a more realistic view as to what might be going on behind the scenes. Talking it through together expands options.

For example, point to the;

- Thumb– 'Someone else pushed the boy who knocked in to me'
- 1st finger – 'The boy didn't realise he'd come into my personal space'
- 2nd finger – 'The boy was busy talking and didn't look where he was going'
- 3rd finger – 'He was out to get me'
- Little finger – 'It was an accident'

Theraplay® Informed Practice – designed to encourage and strengthen bonds of attachment / build relationships with adults and peers. There are 4 dimensions to Theraplay®: structure, engagement, nurture and challenge.

❖ **Activities** – these can be undertaken on a 1:1 basis or in small groups. The activities are carefully planned and designed to upregulate or downregulate depending on the 'state' of the pupil.

For example:

Squiggle drawing: – 1:1. Downregulating

In pairs: one person draws a squiggle on the paper and the other person makes it into a picture. Then swap round.

Balloon Between Two bodies: 1:1 Up-regulating.

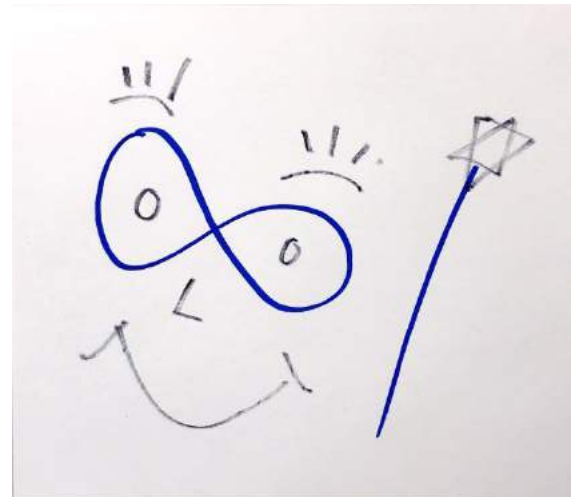
Hold a balloon between you and the child, e.g. between foreheads, stomachs, shoulders, elbows and move across the mat without dropping or popping the balloon. See if you can do this without using hands. Use this opportunity to encourage safe touch in a fun and playful way (i.e. wrap your arms around each other to hold on to the balloon between your stomachs).

Tin Foil Sculptures: 1:1. Downregulating

Place tin foil over body parts to create a sculpture e.g. hand, foot, knee, elbow etc. Use glasses or a shoe if the child is not comfortable with their body being used. Commentate on what you are doing, e.g. 'Can you feel the pressure?' or 'Your hand is warm.'

Straight Face Challenge: 1:1 Up / down regulating

The child has to try to keep a straight face while you try to make him / her laugh by making funny faces.



Create a Special Handshake: 1:1. Can be up or down regulating.

Make up a special handshake together, taking turns to add new gestures, for example high five, clasp hands, wiggle fingers and so on. This can be cumulative over several sessions and can be your beginning and end ritual.

NB: This activity helps to connect with the child and is a way of acknowledging him/her around school. The avoidant child will keep the handshake simple. The ambivalent child may go over the top and you may have to pare it down.

Pass the Feather: - 1:1 or small group Up/down regulating

1: - Blow a feather to your partner / next person – hand to hand.

NB: You can add challenge – ‘How high can we make it go?’ or take a step away from each other.

2: - Using a straw (and your breath!) pick up a feather and pass to your partner / next person. The partner / next person takes the feather from you using their straw. Continue to each other / round the group.



Hand Print lotion: 1:1

The leader pours some lotion on the pupil’s hand and rubs it in while singing:

‘Rub lotion, rub lotion, on [name child]’s hand. It feels so soft, it feels so grand.’

Then gently press the hand onto some black paper – (very grounding)

Sprinkle talcum powder on to the print while singing:

‘It’s snowing; it’s snowing on [name child]’s hand. It feels so soft, it feels so grand.’

Tap off excess powder and the pupil will have a hand print.

N.B. Check for allergies, sensitivities and school policies re use of lotion and talc.



Sunshine Circles – introduced to build relationships with peers and also increase the pupil's trust of school adults by using Theraplay® Informed Practice activities.

Description of Sunshine Circles

- The group is seated together in a circle.
- The leader and co-leaders are seated among the children and participate equally in the fun.
- Activities involve combinations of structure, engagement, challenge, touch, eye contact and FUN!
- Conventional classroom rules for behaviour are suspended so that child's needs can emerge.

Structure of a Small Group Sunshine Circle Session

- Entrance – Welcome Song
- Check-ups – important part to actively notice each individual child
- Up regulating activity
- Down regulating activity
- Food share / Song – feeding is the most basic form of nurturing
- Activity – could be a ritual / handshake
- Transition out of Group

Starting Your Group

Keep it short, sweet and successful!

First sessions:

- Choose group name, teach welcome song
- Check-ups
- Quick, fun activity
- Treat
- Closing song

Gradually add in Theraplay® Informed Practice activities.

- Middle activities that are well structured
- More stimulation
- Challenging activities

Plan sessions to have some active and some calming activities

Always have calm activities at the end

Keep in mind – Why are we doing this? What are the goals for each pupil?

Sunshine Circle Decisions

- Group size
- Location
- Parent involvement – share information about Theraplay® with parent / carers
 - Food – allergies / hygiene issues
 - Check-ups, how will you do these?

An example of a Group / Sunshine Circle

- 🌈 Welcome Song – Sunshine Song
- 🌈 Rules with gestures – No hurts; Stick together; Have fun
- 🌈 Check-ups – use cotton wool balls
- 🌈 Pass a smile
- 🌈 Measure muscles
- 🌈 Food share
- 🌈 Goodbye song – ‘Goodbye Lisa, Goodbye Steven, Goodbye Wenna, We’re glad you came to play’
- 🌈 Transition

“Giving children the opportunity to spend time in a Sunshine Circle has already achieved a positive effect – not only on the target child but also on the other participants”

“Sunshine Groups have started. Bonds are already improving and sensory needs are being met”

All about me / pupil profile / pupil passport

- ❖ A sheet explaining who the pupil is; what his/her strengths are; how adults can help.
- ❖ Staff can then understand and anticipate triggers which results in a positive change for the pupil.

Who-I-can-go-to chart / Team-Around-Pupil chart / Who Can Help You chart.

Develop with the pupil a picture of adults who are there to help. Record positive comments made by the adults, about the pupil, with the pictures. Peers can also be added to the chart. This demonstrates that the pupil can trust many people at school.



Charts / Plans:

- ❖ **Feelings** chart – change the pictures to show how the pupil is feeling.
- ❖ **Behaviour Plan** – shared with all staff; only staff who know the pupil well to intervene; adults to adopt a calm and non-confrontational pose / response. Plans can also ensure consistency.
- ❖ **ABCC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence, Communication) logs** – used to record incidents and then unpick. Debrief when calm to discuss sanctions & discuss more appropriate ways to cope next time.
- ❖ **Restorative Justice** – support the pupil to identify his/her own faults and work out how to 'put things right' after an incident. Ask 'what happened?' or 'I wonder if..' rather than 'Why did you?'
- ❖ **Steps to Success** – or a visual checklist so the child can see what needs to be done in simple steps – it also helps if the child can tick these off as they are achieved.



“The feelings flipchart has been revelation for XX – they use it daily, potentially hourly”

Visual Individual timetable

- ❖ Personalise.
- ❖ Include ample opportunities to have time away from the classroom.
- ❖ Focus on the pupil's strengths.
- ❖ The technique can help to reduce adult dependency.
- ❖ **Task board** – tasks broken down in to small manageable chunks.
- ❖ Closed end tasks.
- ❖ **Now / Next** task board – enables the pupil to achieve a small task followed by a break with a sand timer.



Timers – used in a variety of ways, including:

- ❖ to indicate 10 minutes focus time – develops concentration and boundaries.
- ❖ to break up time spent at tasks – two turns of the 5 minute timer whilst at a task would result in 'star time' as a reward.



- ❖ to build up a regular routine.
- ❖ can also be used to build independence.
 - Structured lunch break** – to build successful lunch breaks, including:
- ❖ Forest School lunch break – use the school grounds to support the pupil.

Building relationships with peers – this could be through playing non-competitive games such as Lego, craft or construction, supported by an adult.

Buddy chair – positioned next to the pupil's chair to enable 'talk partner' work when there is classroom discussion. Also enables the building of positive relationships with peers.

Buddy system – before playtimes the pupil is encouraged to choose a friend to spend the following break time with.

Doodle board – to aid concentration.

Key-ring of visual cues and reminders – includes pictures of 'good choice / poor choice'

Academic Intervention: - to be used when the pupil is in a place ready to achieve academically.

- ❖ Reading interventions.
- ❖ Spelling interventions.
- ❖ Tasks differentiated to meet the pupil's needs.
- ❖ Use the pupil's interests to increase engagement.

Focus on the successes – celebrated in different ways, including:

- ❖ sharing work with chosen adults around the school.
- ❖ the creation of a positive book including all the things they are good at.
- ❖ using 'show and tell' with the rest of the class regularly to share the pupil's recent successes out of school.



Rewards, including:

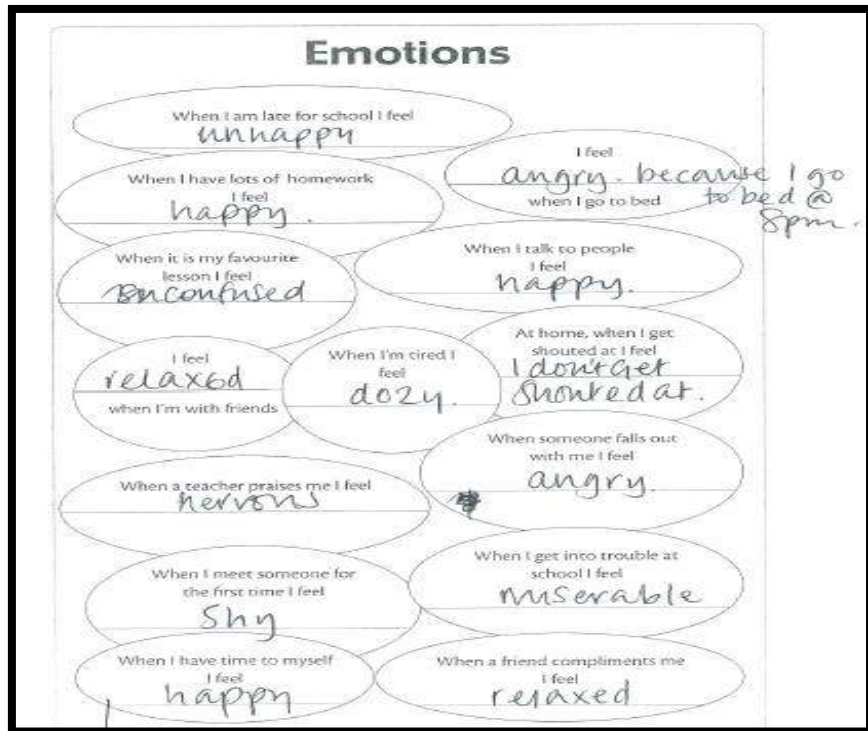
- ❖ **Token system** – remind the pupil what is being worked for. For example, achieving 5 tokens means being allowed to have a chosen reward. Same for sticker charts and points based systems.
- ❖ Sensory bag.
- ❖ Book corner.
- ❖ Puzzle pieces – the pupil earns a puzzle piece for achieving a target. Three puzzle pieces = reward time. If all 6 pieces are given the pupil chooses a prize from the lucky dip box.
- ❖ **Rewards are given - a reward must not be taken away for 'poor' behaviour – have a separate sanction system.**
- ❖ Rewards must be immediate and manageable. It helps to base these on the child's interests.
- ❖ Ensure the child reward system feeds into class rewards too – how does the child's rewards e.g. 5 tokens, help with moving up the class reward system?

Adult time, including:

- ❖ Regular, timetabled sessions with the Learning Mentor, Art Therapist, Family Link Worker etc.
- ❖ Special time with the Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant – to build relationships - could this happen at break time or during assemblies?
- ❖ Regular checks ins – helps to reassure the pupil / reduce anxiety.
- ❖ Agreed pastoral support programme.
- ❖ Named member of staff who has built a trusting relationship with the pupil.
- ❖ Adults need to be physically present for the pupil and be emotionally robust enough to support them.

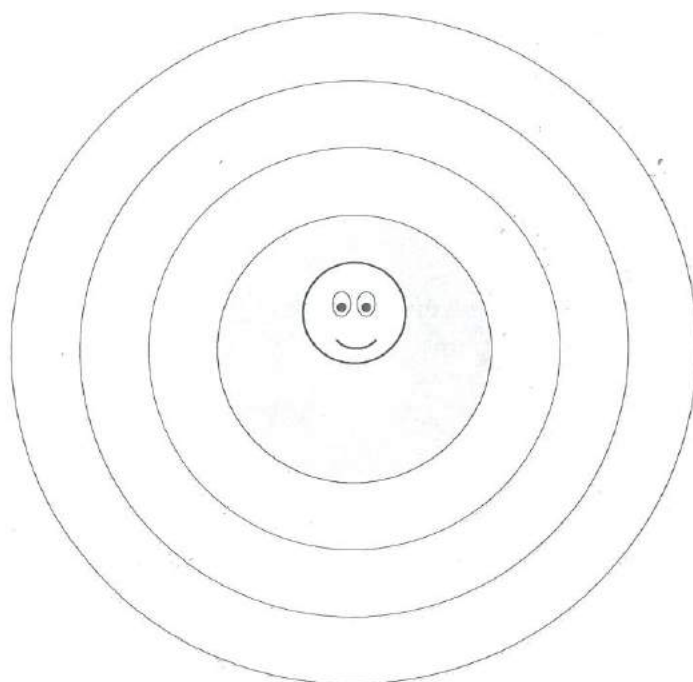
A key part of this project was providing pupils with some 1:1 sessions with a Family Link Worker (or equivalent)

The Family Link worker took a solution focused approach to children and families. Through the project, five 1:1 sessions were offered to each child / school to focus on emotional resilience, emotional safety, helping the pupils to start to understand his/her emotions and his/her responses to them. A range of the resources used during some of these sessions are shown below.



An activity to enable a child to think about different emotions and situations - the child's teacher was previously unaware that praise from teachers makes the child feel nervous.

My Support Circle



My heart is



- Sad/Jealous.
- Anger.
- Happy.
- Rebellious.

This is me



Whole school interventions:

Some of our project schools found that an important part of the work was a 'mind-set shift' of staff. For example – from saying they 'cannot exclude' to 'exclusion being something they do not do'.

Seeing the behaviour as a symptom that the child's needs were not being met was also key.

Considering how a school gets to know its pupils and understands the various challenges they are facing was found to be a useful agenda item for a whole school staff meeting. Thinking in this manner encourages all staff to put into place support and strategies within each classroom to support these needs. The Department for Education recognises the quality of teaching as the single biggest factor influencing the child's classroom experience.

Some of the approaches used in this project were also shared as part of whole school development opportunities, for example:

- ❖ Shared Theraplay® Informed Practice games with staff.
- ❖ Staff meeting on Theraplay® Informed Practice games and Sunshine Circles.
- ❖ Behaviour Plans shared across the whole staff – ways to de-escalate and things to avoid.
- ❖ Student Conference led by the Head of House and SENCO for all teachers and support staff of the student – to understand background, share concerns and agree strategies.

Top Tip: Make every day a fresh start – ensure that, where possible, any consequences happen on the day and that the child / young person knows that tomorrow is a fresh start.

Other Resources that were used during the project

Books:

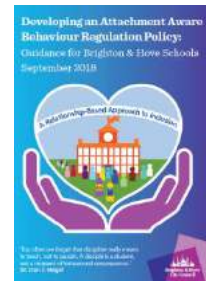
- Starving The Anxiety Gremlin - Kate Collins-Donnelly
- Starving The Anger Gremlin - Kate Collins-Donnelly
- Starving The Stress Gremlin - Kate Collins-Donnelly
- Zones of Regulation - Leah Kuypers
- Banish your Self-Esteem Thief - Kate Collins-Donnelly
- The incredible 5-point scale - Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
- Creating a Circle of Friends. A Peer Support and Inclusion Workbook - Colin Newton and Derek Wilson
- Becoming an Adoption Friendly School - Dr Emma Gore Langton and Katherine Boy
- Hey Warrior – Karen Young
- Blob Tree resources – www.blobtree.com

Apps

- Headspace

Sensory box/room equipment:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Oval Liquid Timer | <input type="checkbox"/> Colour-changing Sensory Mood Light |
| • Tobar Expand Ball | <input type="checkbox"/> Fidget Cube |
| • Colourful Stretchy String | <input type="checkbox"/> Jumbo Scented Slow-rising Squishies |
| • Lonzonth Plum Blossom Building Blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> Watercolour Paint Set |
| • Stretchy Stringy Play Balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Doodle Pattern Colouring Books |
| • Tangles | <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Stress Relaxing Art Therapy Colouring Books |
| • Reversible Sequin Pillows | <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness Activity Cards |
| • Light-up Sensory Cushion | <input type="checkbox"/> Fansteck Squeeze Ball |
| • Bean Bags | |



Guidance:

- Mental health and behaviour in schools - How to identify and support pupils whose behaviour suggests they may have unmet mental health needs:
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance:
- https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/460-emotionally-based-school-avoidance
- Developing and Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy, Brighton and Hove https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/Behaviour%20Regulation%20Policy%20Guidance%20-%20Sep%202018_1.pdf

Impact

All schools involved in this project have noted benefits with their focus child. A range of these are noted below and throughout this project report.

Outcome & Impact on the child

All data was collected and analysed to identify the impact on the individual child. These have been listed in order of greatest impact. However, all of the points listed below contributed significantly to the progress made by the children.

- ❖ Significantly improved relationships with peers, teachers and parents.
- ❖ Individuals were able to self-regulate with some support – there was a noted reduction in the number of meltdowns seen during the case study period. Staff were able to understand the triggers leading to an outburst and use preventative strategies to de-escalate the situation. There was also a reduction in recovery time after a meltdown. Children were able to calm down and return to class to continue with their learning more quickly.
- ❖ More regular completion of independent learning in class. Individuals were sometimes supported with the use of an individual workstation.
- ❖ A reduction in incidents, especially at break and lunch times. The use of a calm down zone and sensory spaces supported individuals ability to self-regulate at difficult times.
- ❖ Individuals had an improved attitude to learning and a greater self-esteem, feeling more valued by peers, teachers and parents.
- ❖ The use of sensory circuits at the beginning of the day supported children so they were ready to focus on their learning.
- ❖ Improved friendships with peers and more successful break times.

“XX has developed greater confidence and is more willing to take risks with learning.”

“ XX has demonstrated and verbalised they want to be in school – it has become their safe place and now believes they are wanted and understood”

“XX is starting to develop his own calming strategies and will go to his safe space without being asked”

“ XX has greater self-regulation and has shown more responsibilities for their actions.”

XX is now very rarely communicating using aggression and violent behaviours. XX knows that we listen and care about him.”

Outcome and Impact on family and professional relationships

- ❖ Increased positive relationships between school and home in 6 project schools, e.g. parents coming into/speaking to school or engaging with schools where they previously hadn't. The other 3 project schools already had established parent relationships.
- ❖ Empowered teachers to feel more confident in implementing strategies (all schools).
- ❖ Increasing positive relationships between teacher and child (all schools).
- ❖ Teachers invested time in the child to understand a 'holistic' view and what their strengths and interests were (all schools).
- ❖ School implementing strategies suggested (all schools).
- ❖ Children valuing the one to one time and using confidential space to talk (all schools).
- ❖ Teachers using time to share /offload and ask for advice through Q & A and meetings, new resources etc.
- ❖ Families engaging in further services - where signposting was relevant. For example: Families agreeing to previously suggested Early Help Plan.
- ❖ School valuing importance of safe space for children and providing tent / corner / room.
- ❖ Staff understanding emotional development of children and impact on their learning.
- ❖ Teachers using support suggested within transition meetings or sharing it with other staff members.

Parent feedback (who attended all project sessions with schools):

"As the parent of a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who has some quite challenging behaviour, I am very aware both of how disruptive he can be in a mainstream school and how much of the teacher's, TA's, SENCo's and Senior Leadership Team's time can be taken up dealing with meltdowns when he is overwhelmed by his surroundings and situation. I also have personal experience of the damage that repeated exclusions have on a child's esteem, as well as the family as a whole, and how exclusions can actually increase the number of incidents rather than reduce them.

At the very first session it was stressed that in order to turn things around for a particular child the staff involved with the project would first have to invest even more time in developing a relationship with that child and gaining their trust. The evidence was presented that if this could be

achieved then the child would feel more supported, the number of incidents would decline, the need for internal seclusions and exclusions would be greatly reduced and the child would have greater access to learning. A win for the child, their family and the school.

What has struck me most has been the passion with which those involved in the project embraced the changes and the positive feeling that went round the room at each session when attendees shared their experiences and successes. It has been wonderful to hear that in some cases the rest of the school that the attendees were from have been inspired to adopt what they were learning. It has also been refreshing to see a real appreciation of the importance of involving and working with parents.

As with most things, not everything that was suggested worked with every child and sometimes a child's personal circumstances meant that some things had to be put on hold. However, in the vast majority of cases the strategies suggested have made a real difference to these children's lives and their behaviour. Please take the time to read what the schools' experiences were and consider trialling the therapies discussed."

"We cannot control the home life of a child but...we maybe able to give them the skills to allow them to deal with the highs and lows of school and home life!" Class Teacher

"XX has much improved relationships with children in the class. His calmer nature has been recognised by the parents of other children in the class and he has been invited to social events as a result. He feels like he belongs and will often lead and instigate games at playtime." School.

" XX has established a new positive relationship with their parent"

Outcome and Impact on Whole School

Project schools were able to choose what they put in place to support the focus child in their school. The following list provides examples of the work undertaken as a direct result of this project.

- ❖ Whole staff training sessions to disseminate information and identify other children as benefitting from 'Check in' times to allow early bonding.
- ❖ Inexpensive sensory boxes in classrooms to support children subsequently identified as having sensory needs.
- ❖ Friendship group has been set up by the Learning Mentor.
- ❖ Shared Theraplay® techniques for both the focus child and more widely used for children with a range of needs across the school.

- ❖ Staff training meeting based around Theraplay® activities (including Sunshine Circles) and to support staff and teachers using these practices. Lots of ideas and experiences are now regularly shared within the schools.
- ❖ Behaviour Plans shared across the whole staff along with ways to de-escalate and things to avoid.
- ❖ Staff training for school leaders, class teachers and Learning Support Assistants – attachment, trauma and loss. ‘Team Pupil’ photos of staff who support the child, check ins, sensory activities. Some staff have been sent on all additional training.

“My personal practice has changed dramatically – I am more understanding of the children’s struggles and have new strategies to support them. I am now much better at building children up and praising their effort and catching them making ‘good decisions”. SENCo

“I feel that I am not so authoritative and try harder to build individual relationships with the children in order to understand them and their needs better. It has given me strategies to calm and soothe and not just discipline these children.”

“Consideration has been given to staffing to meet needs of students with SEMH difficulties – including TA hours redirected from in-class support to small groups focusing on zones of regulation, self-awareness and Theraplay®.”

“Positive impact on wider school environment – greater awareness of emotional and sensory needs”

Next Steps

This project was undertaken during the Summer Term 2018, and some of the next steps focus on effective transition support for the focus child. For example:

- ❖ Transition booklets for in school transitions adapted to the individual child. They should be on what the child needs to know.
- ❖ Conversations between current and new class teachers will be made a yearly, timetabled event.
- ❖ Continued support / team for children from familiar adults – e.g. children will have timetabled time with previous staff member in their new class to continue relationships.

All schools that have been part of this project are keen to further develop practice within their schools. Some of their next steps include:

- ❖ More discussion as a school on WHY behaviour happens.
- ❖ On-going staff training– attachment, sensory support, behavioural strategies, about individual children’s needs.
- ❖ Transition to secondary schools or new classes being carefully planned for.
- ❖ Many of the primary schools within the project are considering having sensory boxes in all classrooms to support sensory needs. Children will be provided with time to learn how to play with the sensory equipment.
- ❖ School are keen to continue to invest in sensory equipment for school.
- ❖ Further parent / family support opportunities are being considered.
- ❖ Cool done zones and safe spaces to be part of all classrooms.
- ❖ Seating – think about where and when and how some children are asked to complete work.

Recommendations for all schools

- All staff need to recognise that challenging behaviour is a means of communication and to be curious as to what a child is trying to communicate.
- Identify how best to engage with a child on an emotional level – this often helps you unlock how to get the best out of him/her.
- Adapt and individualise the daily timetable – include lunchbreaks and playtimes.
- Ensure playtime equipment is well kept – things do get broken or lost through use and can, rarely, be misused by children. Have children been 'taught' how to get the best out of equipment?
- Establish a range of strategies adapted for the individual child. e.g. sensory, Theraplay®, emotional support etc. to effectively support needs.
- Create a 'safe space' for the child / young person to go when feeling stressed or anxious.
- School should consider purchasing and making available a range of inexpensive sensory objects in all classrooms– pupils will need to learn how to use these resources – this will need to be modelled. Some children prefer to call them 'sensory tools' as this avoids them being seen as 'toys'. Different sensory objects suit different people.
- Ensure there are consistent practices and language across school. Keep language short and simple. Allow children time; for example, a child needs at least 10 seconds of 'take up time' to process and respond to what is said. Some children with SEND may take longer.
- Plan all transitions carefully: both in school e.g. break-times, home to school, and to the new classes / schools.
- Develop your school's training and development programme for all its staff including volunteers, teachers, SENCo's, Support staff, TA's and Lunchtime Supervisors. This should ensure all have a good understanding of children's behaviours, triggers and how to support, and understanding of the impact of attachment needs as well as how to empower both staff and parents, whilst supporting children to be more resilient and have self-belief.
- Plan and deliver specific training on attachment and sensory support (e.g. Theraplay®, Sunshine Circles) for staff through a range of approaches e.g. staff meetings, INSET, twilight sessions
- Share behaviour plans across whole staff.
- All staff need to be accountable for behaviour with the school and understand how the management of a few children may look different from the majority, but that the expectations are the same. It is the

responsibility of all staff to make sure reasonable adjustments have been made to promote positive behaviour and success.

- Monitor the impact of support so you know it is effective – e.g. reduction in the number of ‘melt downs’, recovery time.
- Rethink interventions if necessary – consider redeploying LSAs from academic interventions to ones that support a child’s emotional regulation and / or sensory needs.
- Remember all resources and strategies are tools – they aid conversations to help the child learn how to self-regulate. This is also true of assessment strategies; use them as tools to help build a picture of the needs of the child.
- Identify key workers to establish strong relationships – a whole school team around the child approach works well.
- Develop positive relationships with the family – consider how information from the family about the child is gathered and updated within school to inform practice. Parents are often ‘experts’ in their child’s needs and how they can be met. They often know what calms and energises their child. Make use of this free intelligence!
- Provide support for the wider family, consider an off-site element to a staff role e.g. Learning Mentor, Family Link Worker. They can have a significant impact and can support parents with boundary setting and routines.
- Consider how your school helps its students to understand ‘what good learning posture and language looks like’ e.g. eye contact, calm body, taking turns, listening and the language e.g. “my idea is...I suggest...can you explain to me?”
- Provide supervision for staff to support challenges and develop an action focused creative approach.
- School ethos needs to be open and reflective, especially with staff attitudes and practices towards challenging behaviour. From top down (heads, Senior Leadership Team and governors) and embedded at all levels within the whole school (lunchtime supervisors, support staff etc.). Even if you think you / your school is good, there are always new approaches that can be tried.
- Continually make emotional wellbeing a priority – at child, family and staff level: be forward thinking.
- Ensure school behaviour policy reflects the needs for reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs. Ensure that rules are fair for all children – a child who finds themselves ‘in trouble’ may need more support to ‘follow-the-rules’.
- **Remember change can take time!**

“With all these steps in place we feel this will continue to improve confidence, self-esteem and allow XX to regular emotion and control their behaviour, therefore reducing the risk of exclusion”. Class teacher

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire used by independent Family Link Worker



Solution Focussed Therapeutic Support & Intervention for Children and Families

Name:

Date:

Pre-Programme Evaluation with children:

1. How would you describe your relationships with your family?



2. How would you describe your relationships with your teachers?



3. How would you describe your relationships with your friends?



4. How many people do you feel you can talk to about your feelings, worries and anxieties?

0 1 2 3 4 5 5+

5. How easy do you find it to talk about feelings?

0 ←————→ 10 Easy

6. How easy to you find it to talk to others about their feelings?

0 ←————→ 10 Easy

7. How easy do you find it to recognise when you are feeling safe? (Stress free, comfortable, relaxed)

0 ←————→ 10 Easy

8. How easy do you find it to recognise when you are feelings unsafe? (Worried, anxious, threatened)

0 ←————→ 10 Easy



9. How easy do you find it to cope with difficult situations and emotions? (sad/angry)

0 ←————→ **10 Easy**

10. How easy do you find it to stand up for yourself?

0 ←————→ **10 Easy**

11. How confident do you feel at keeping yourself safe at home?

0 ←————→ **10 Confident**

12. How confident do you feel at keeping yourself safe at School?

0 ←————→ **10 Confident**

13. What /who helps you now?

Strategies:

Way people talk to you:

Behaviours (things people do):

Teachers/Staff:

Family:

14. What works best for you?

15. Why does that work best for you?

16. What would you like to be different?

17. What's your best hope for our time together?



18. How will you know things have changed?

19. What will people see?

20. What will they be doing differently?

21. What will you be doing differently?

22. What difference would that make to you?

23. What will that lead to?

24. Anything else that you think is important for people to know?



25. Please can you tell me 3 brilliant things about you? Your talents/strengths