

SCHOOL COUNSELLING

WHEN FEELINGS GET TOO BIG: WHAT CAN I SAY?

Helping Kids Put Big Emotions Into Words

Sometimes feelings feel so big, it's hard to know what to say or do. This is especially true for children who are still learning how to name emotions and ask for support.

Below are some simple phrases that children can use when they're overwhelmed, stuck, confused, or unsure how to ask for help. This can help them feel heard, and helps the adults around them know how to respond. You can share this with your child and encourage them to highlight or circle the phrases that feel right for them.

Helpful things to say when everything feels too much

- "I don't feel okay right now, but I don't know why."
- "Can I just sit here with you for a bit?"
- "Everything feels too much right now."
- "I need a break."
- "I feel like I might cry, and I don't want to talk yet."
- "Can you help me calm down?"
- "I'm not sure what I need, but I know I need something."
- "I feel really angry and I need space."
- "I feel overwhelmed and I don't know what to do."
- "Can we talk later when I'm ready?"
- "I feel upset and I'm trying to stay in control."
- "I want help but I don't want to talk about it right now."

What You Can Do as a Parent or Carer:

- Stay calm and present – Your grounded presence helps regulate theirs.
- Listen without fixing straight away – Just being heard can reduce overwhelm.
- Offer choices – "Would you like to talk, take a break, or go for a walk?"
- Model emotional language – Share your own feelings in healthy ways.
- Remind them they're not alone – "I'm here. We'll figure it out together."

Warmly,
Emma Aleksovska,
School Counsellor



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HELPING CHILDREN NAME THEIR EMOTIONS

Building Emotional Awareness at Home and School

Before children can regulate their emotions, they need to be able to recognise and name them. This is called emotional literacy- the ability to notice how we feel, understand where it's coming from, and put it into words.

When children can name their emotions, they're more likely to:

- Ask for help in appropriate ways
- Use calming or problem-solving strategies
- Build stronger friendships and connections
- Bounce back from challenges

Why it matters?

Many students say things like "I'm fine" or "I don't know" when they're actually feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, sad, or anxious. Giving them the right words helps reduce confusion and creates space for healthy support.

Use a Feelings Vocabulary

Introduce more than just "happy," "sad," or "angry." Try using words like:

- Worried
- Frustrated
- Nervous
- Disappointed
- Embarrassed
- Excited
- Lonely
- Confused
- Proud

Help Them Link Feelings to Body Cues

- "It looks like your fists are tight – are you feeling angry or tense?"
 - "Is your tummy hurting because you're feeling nervous?"
- Teaching body awareness helps kids recognise emotions early, before they escalate.

Model It Yourself

Talk about your own feelings out loud, in age-appropriate ways.
"I'm feeling a bit stressed, so I'm going to take a deep breath and have a cup of tea."

Create a Feelings Check-In Routine

Use a daily moment (like after school or at bedtime) to check in:

- "What was the best part of your day?"
- "Was there a hard part too?"
- "How did you feel today – and what helped you feel better?"

Building emotional literacy takes time and repetition, and it's something we work on in the counselling space every day. If you'd like help supporting your child in this area, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Warmly,
Emma Aleksovska,
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