

Supporting Children and Young People Experiencing Barriers to Attending School

Supplementary training: in line with online information and resources found here:

[Guidance to support children and young people experiencing barriers attending school - Gloucestershire County Council](#)



Agenda

To consider what is meant by 'barriers to attendance'

To consider the different 'barriers' CYP can experience.

To consider approaches to support CYP experiencing these barriers as well as their families and adults in school.

To briefly consider the role of the school system in supporting CYP



Barriers to School Attendance

Difficulties experienced by CYP attending school can be cyclic and behaviours can become ingrained.

Promoting school attendance is likely to take time.

Recognising difficulties a CYP is experiencing as early as possible and providing appropriate support is of key importance.



The national picture...

UK legal requirement for all CYP to attend school between the ages of 5-16. All 16-19 year olds required to continue accessing education/ training.

CYP absent from school are more likely to leave school with few or no qualifications, be out of work, suffer mental health difficulties and become homeless.

Approximately 1- 2% of the school population are absent from school due to emotional reasons.



‘Persistent absence from school’: less than 90 per cent school attendance.

‘severe persistent absence- less than 50%.

Why is it important to support attendance?

- Number of factors which could affect attendance for children with a social worker / in care:
 - Multiple moves / changes in schools
 - Gaps in learning
 - Stability of home life
 - Underlying personal factors eg young carer, socio-economic factors, parenting
 - Impact of life experiences on coping



What's in a name?

- school refusal
- school phobia
- school avoidance
- parentally condoned absence
- truancy
- persistent absenteeism
- emotionally based school avoidance



Terms can suggest responsibility or blame for CYP and their families.

Important to consider the language that we use in this context.

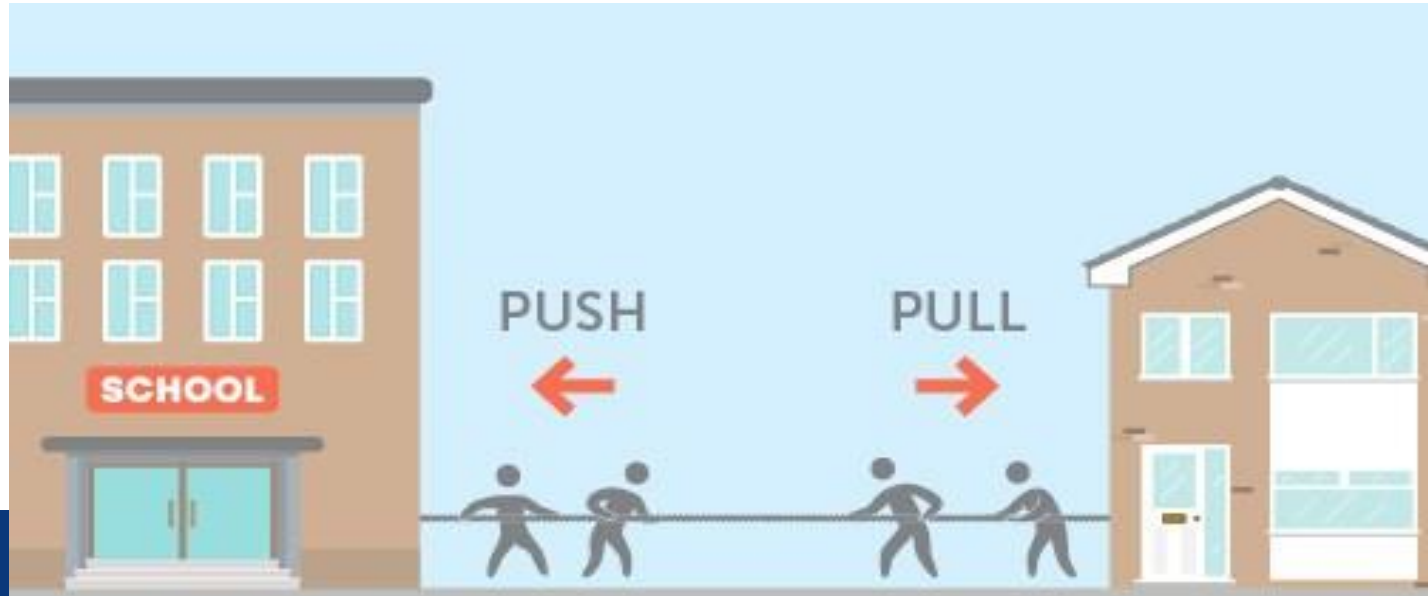
Variety of reasons why CYP experience barriers. Not fixed over time.



Push and pull factors

A **'Push'** factor 'pushes' the child or young person towards attending school.

A **'Pull'** factor 'pulls' the child or young person away from attending school



Activity

What issues/ reasons/ barriers are you aware of for CYP not attending school?



Contributing factors

Home and family factors



School factors

Individual factors



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Accountable



Integrity



Empower



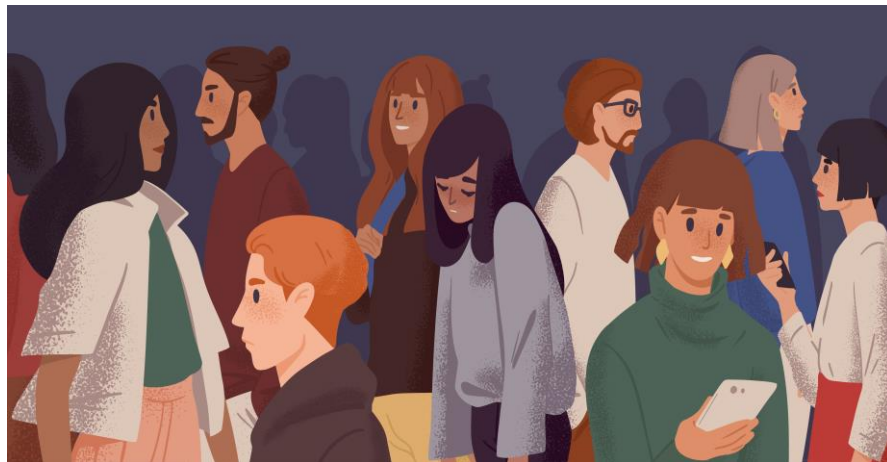
Respect



Excellence

What schools might notice...

- Distress separating from parent or carer;
- Verbalising concerns about the safety/wellbeing of someone at home;
- Difficulties arriving in school;
- Expressing a want to attend but struggling to do so;
- Struggling to leave home;
- Patterns of absence;
- Reluctance to attend school trips;
- Recurrent absences- 'minor illnesses';
- Physical symptoms;
- Changes to temperament;
- Negative commentary about self;
- Difficulties concentrating;
- Changes to social behaviour;
- Changes in academic engagement and/or progress.



Exclusion and Barriers to Attendance

Exclusion can:

- Abruptly end friendships
- Abruptly end trusting relationships with key adults
- Reinforce a negative self-image
- Result in disruptions within education
- Contribute to difficulties reintegrating socially and academically back into educational settings.



Thoughts, feelings and behaviours

The ability to understand and express feelings

Thought: “This work is getting too hard”

Feeling: worried

Sensation: heart racing

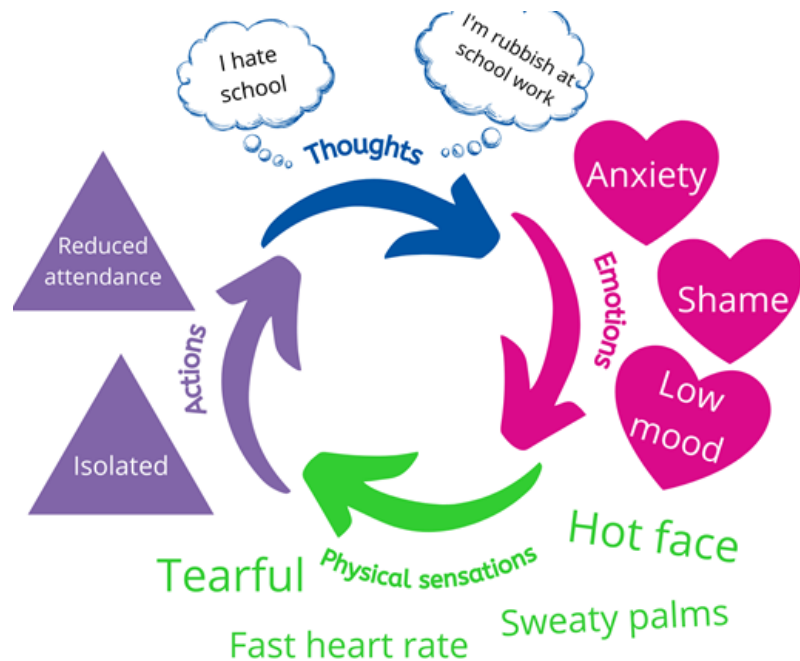
Behaviour: avoiding school

Thought: “why am I different to others?”

Feeling: confused

Sensation: prickling tears

Behaviour: missing lessons



What is Emotional Literacy?

- Knowing when you are feeling a certain way;
- Naming that feeling or emotion;
- Sharing this feeling with trusted other/s;
- Identifying personal strategies that alleviate difficult emotions and encourage feelings of contentment or ease;
- Applying useful strategies to promote emotional wellbeing;
- Recognising that emotions are transient and will change;
- Accepting that there will be commonplace stressors.



Promoting Resilience

- Considering CYP's ambitions, aspirations and motivations
- Providing access to positive experiences
- Providing opportunities to develop confidence and self-esteem
- Promoting feelings of safety and security
- Providing a sense of belonging
- Supporting development of positive relationships with adults/ peers
- Ensuring CYP feels listened to and understood
- Promoting Emotional Literacy



Push and Pull factors

Push (to school)

Trusted adult

School dinners

Have a friend in school they like

Pull (away from school)

Sanctions

Too noisy

Other people in the group don't attend school

Parent struggles to engage in education



Push and Pull factors- what can schools do?

Push (to school)

Having a consistent adult who they like and have chosen to 'check in with them at an agreed time in the day

Having opportunities to choose foods and access additional snacks available

Times where they can connect with peers who they have a relationships with and children they like eg a club or activity together

Pull (away from school)

All staff use a relationship approach rather than behavioural sanction approach

Having access to a calm and safe space when needed or being able to wear an earphone if suitable

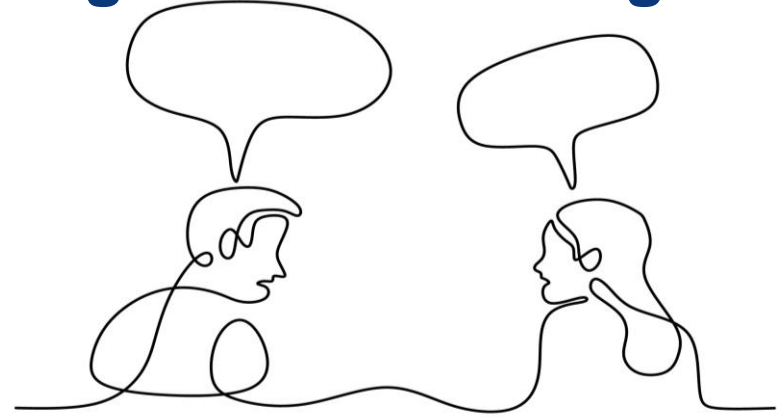
Encouraging additional relationships with others, looking for positive peer connections and relationships based on choice and interests

School being aware of challenges and offering support to access in a way which they feel comfortable with and can engage with eg coffee mornings, regular check ins



Building trust and relationships through active listening

- Focus your attention on the CYP
- Reflect on what has been said/communicated
- Ask open questions
- Summarise what you've heard
- Don't prepare your response
- Notice body language and tone of voice
- Communicate empathy, openness, respect, curiosity



Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

Dr. John Gottman

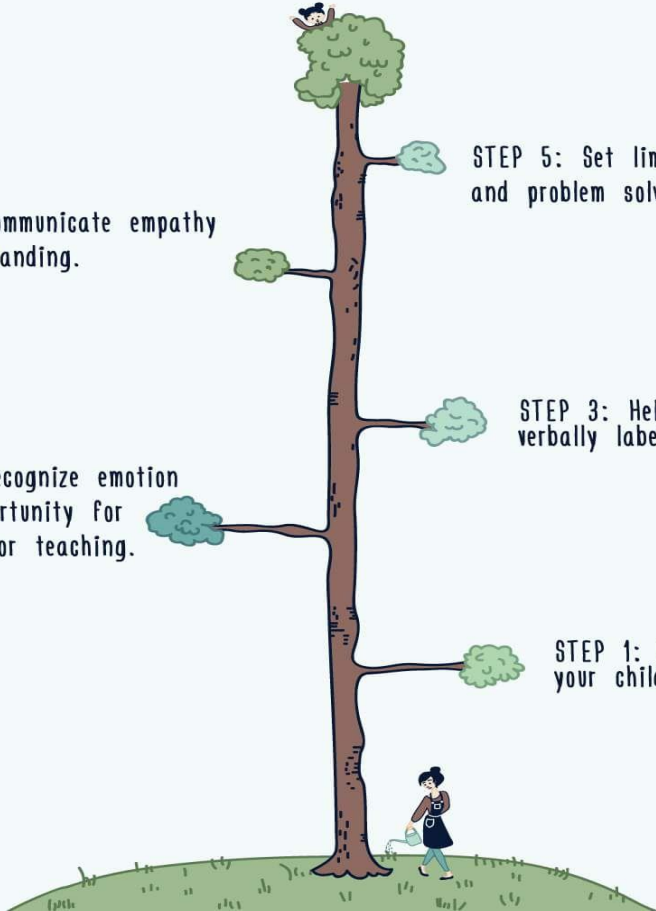
STEP 4: Communicate empathy and understanding.

STEP 2: Recognize emotion as an opportunity for connection or teaching.

STEP 5: Set limits and problem solve.

STEP 3: Help your child verbally label emotions.

STEP 1: Be aware of your child's emotions.



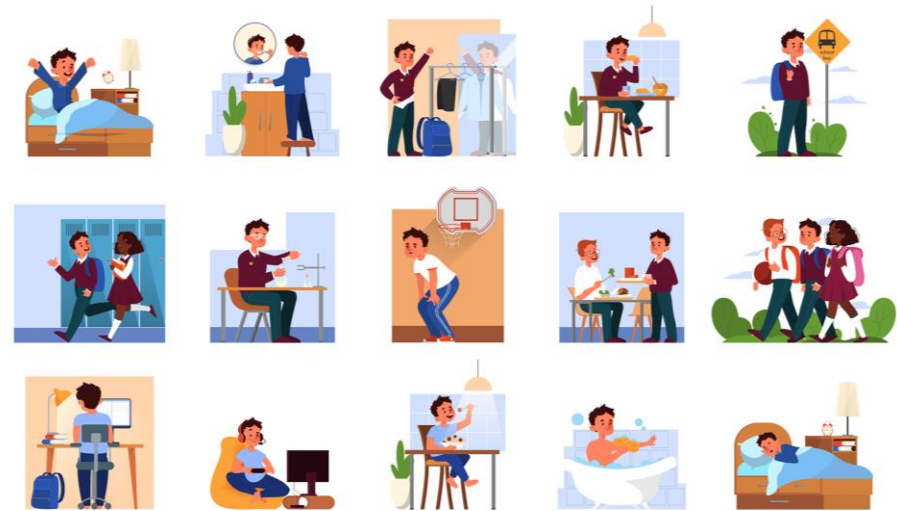
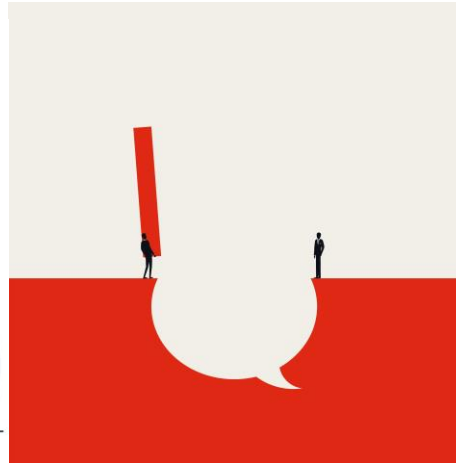
The Gottman Institute

Emotion Coaching

Responding to CYP needs

Some CYP may need support:

- Managing time and transition periods
- With changes to routine
- Managing sensory experiences and sensations
- With tasks where they fear failure
- Within social situations and less structured times
- In order to be understood



The school environment



How can you help?

- Support with engagement and learning
- Working together
- Communication with parents/carers
- Making a Child-Centred / Person-Centred Plan
- Looking after yourself
- Having a relation-based whole-school practice



Supporting with engagement and learning

Learning tailored to needs.

Tasks are achievable and choices provided.

Work is prepared, marked and returned, even when a young person is not attending.

Less focus on 'catching up'.

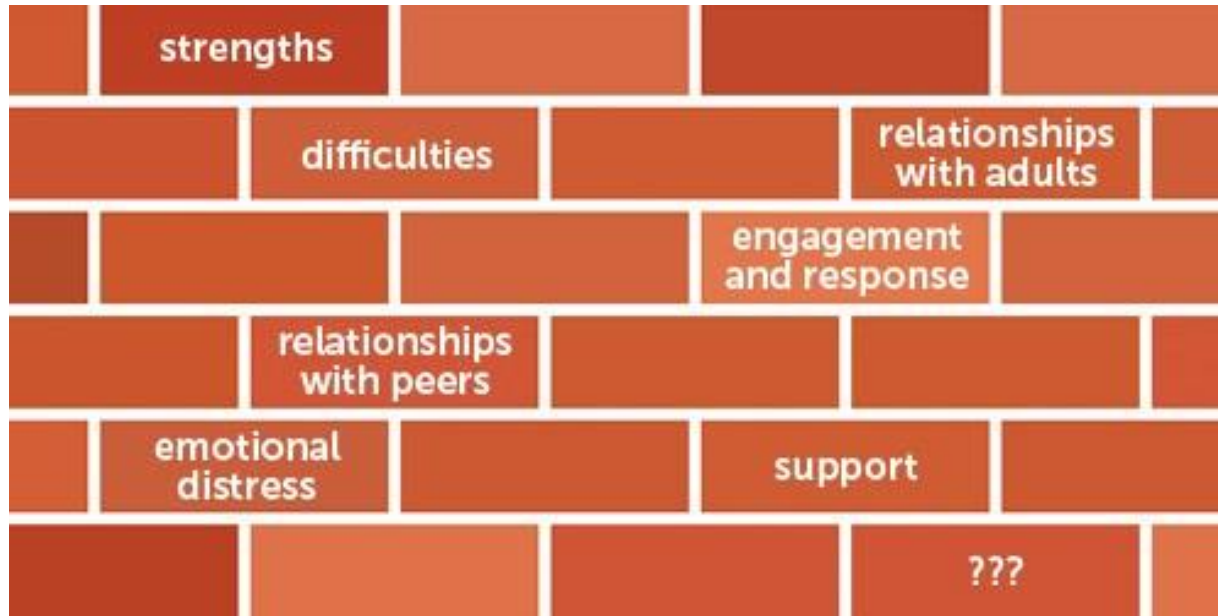
Opportunities to ask questions, have fun, take risks, and make mistakes.

Welcoming and accepting.

Avoid asking where a young person has been.



Working Together



Communication with parents and carers



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Making a plan

- CYP-centred
- Place CYP feels comfortable
- Supporting communication using a method that feels comfortable for CYP
- Consider barriers and resilience factors
- Actions agreed and a plan devised/followed up.



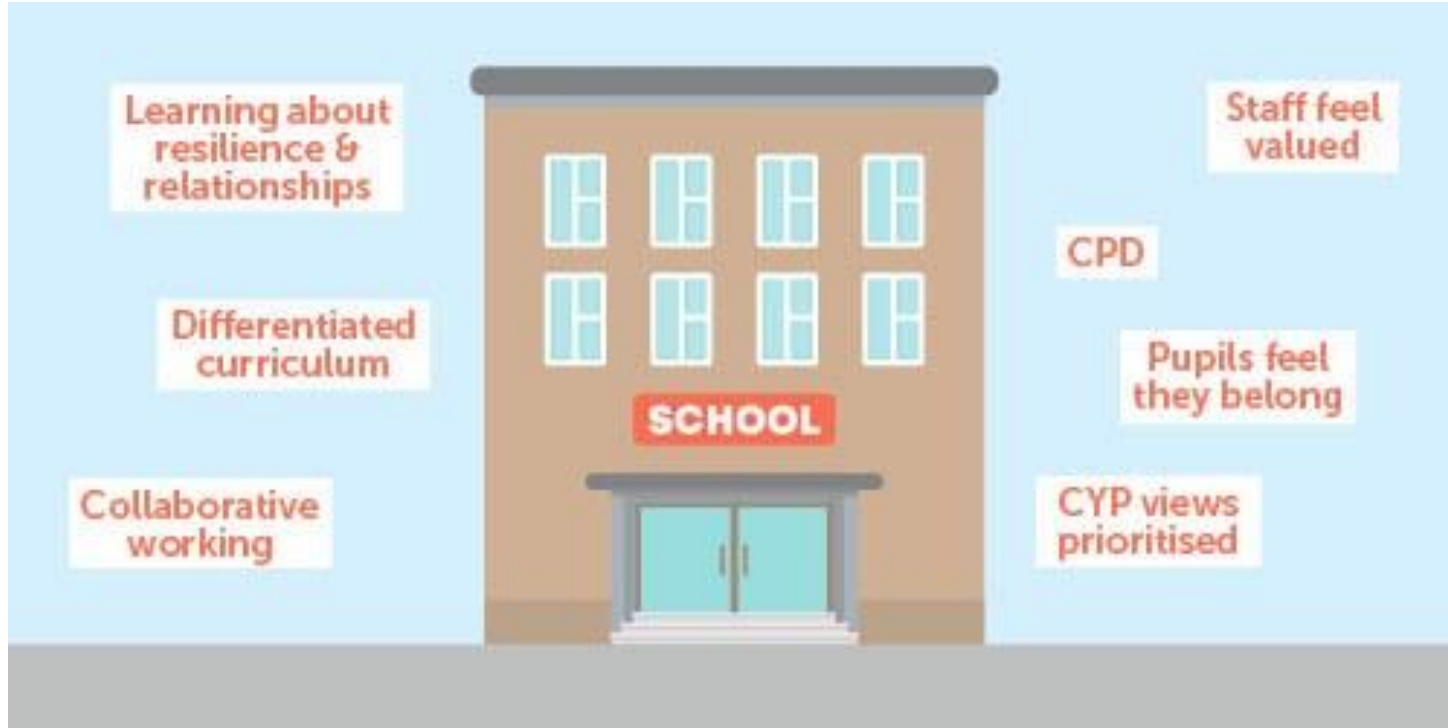
Staff wellbeing



HOW TO USE OXYGEN MASK ON PLANE



Whole school working practices and ethos



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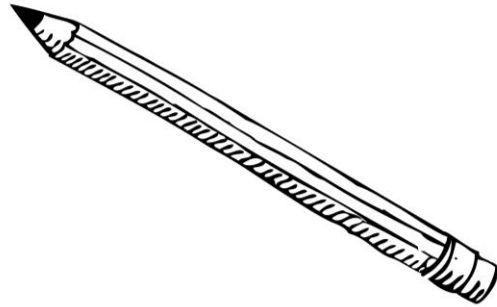
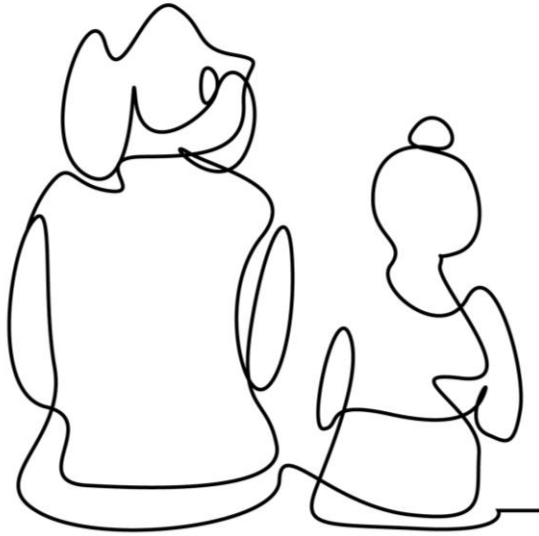


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Ideas and resources

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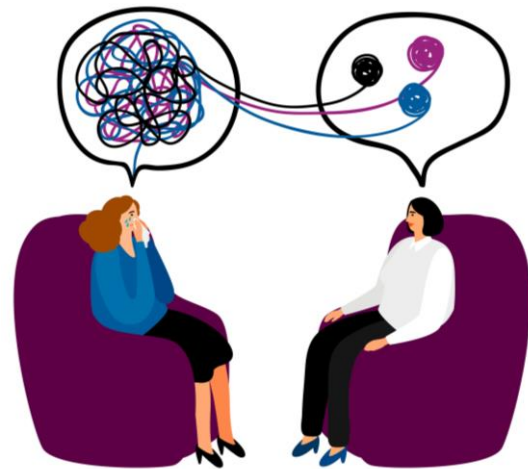
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Other ideas to promote inclusion and belonging

From CYP views in GCC



Support Services

- **Gloucestershire**
- Teens in Crisis (TiC)
- Talk Together
- Glos Talks
- Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL)
- SENDIASS
- SEND Travel Enablement Team
- **Nationwide**
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (Department for Education)
- Supporting children with medical needs (Department for Education)
- School attendance and absence (Gov.uk)
- Not Fine in School
- Square Peg
- Define Fine
- [Language That Cares - TACT Fostering \(tactcare.org.uk\)](https://tactcare.org.uk)



Questions

