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1. Teacher to ask children if they have any worries

* Children to write down one worry per leaf

1. Teacher to ask questions to get children thinking

* What does your body feel like when you are worried? Are there warning signs?
* What is the worst thing that could happen if the worry came true?
* Is there anything they can do about it?

Everyone, including children, have worries now and again. We can support children by acknowledging and normalising these feelings and emotions, to encourage them to talk about their worries rather than bottling it up.

A worry tree is an activity to support children to identify and offload worries, rather than dwelling on them. The activity helps children to express themselves in a more creative way.

You can do this as a practical activity, as outlined below, or as a written activity.

1. Class to go and collect twigs or thin branches.
2. Children to decorate jar or vase. Add stickers to tie a piece of ribbon around the neck.

* **ALTERNATIVE:** children to draw a trunk or branches on a big piece of paper

1. Children to place cluster of twigs inside the jar, like a bunch of flowers.
2. Cut leaves out (see resource) and hole punch one end.

* **ALTERNATIVE:** children to glue leaves to trunk
* A jam jar or small vase
* Stickers or ribbon for decoration (optional)
* Long twigs or skinny branches
* Coloured paper
* Scissors
* Hole punch
* String, twine, thread or ribbon (2 different colours)

*Proposed Learning Objective:* To recognise worries and how to manage them

***Before starting the lesson*** *ask the children: ‘Does anyone every have any worries?*

Today’s lesson is going to focus on creative ways to manage our worries

* Worries are fleeting and we don’t always worry about the same thing
* Sometimes, there is nothing we can do about our worries and we need to use activities such as mindfulness to manage them
* Other times, we can problem solve to identify solutions so we no longer worry
* Revisit the worry trees once a week to see the change in worries over time
* Utilise the worry tree to include:
  + Things we are grateful for
  + Emotions
  + Helpful coping strategies

1. If the child cannot do anything about the worry, they should tie this with one coloured ribbon and attach to their tree

* If the child cannot do anything about it, the worry should be put aside and tied to the tree using one coloured ribbon
* If they think they can do something, they can decide what to do and when they’ll do it, and write this on the back of the worry. They can then tie this to their tree using a different colour.

1. Teacher to explain to children the difference between the two types of worry

* Hypothetical worries: when there isn’t something you can do about it, normally a “what if”
* Practical worries: when there is something you can do about it and you have to problem solve to find a solution

1. **ALTERNATIVE:** if using tree trunk resource, children should colour hypothetical worries leaf in one colour and practical worries in another, and glue to trunk
2. Teacher to revisit the worry trees the next day and reflect on the worries
3. Teacher to ask questions:

* Did you do what you said you would do?
* How did it go? Why did/didn’t you do it?
* For hypothetical worries, is it still a worry?

1. If child is still having this worry, the leaf will remain on the tree and is removed if no longer a problem
2. Teacher to ask children whether the worries remain constant, or if they want to add any more
3. Teacher to explain that the worries will be revisited tomorrow and they are to be set aside for now
4. After children have put aside their worries, it is helpful to engage in some mindfulness or relaxation activities to try and redirect their attention away from their worries.

* Teacher to use resource booklet with range of relaxation activities