



Spotlight on...Strategies to Support SEMH



February 2nd – 9th was **Children's Mental Health Week**, and we want to take a moment to focus on the importance of supporting the emotional well-being of children with SEND, especially those with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. All children should feel comfortable expressing their emotions, but we know that sometimes children with additional needs find this more difficult.

Here are some strategies to help support them:

Creating a Safe Space

Find a calm and quiet place where your child can open up, free from distractions. Whether it's a cosy corner, a walk together, or a quiet chat before bed, having a safe space encourages communication.

Listening and Reassuring

Let your child know that you are always there for them. Simply listening without rushing to provide answers can be a powerful way to support them. Reassure them with words like, *"I love you no matter what. Nothing will change that."*

Understanding and Labelling Emotions

Everyone experiences emotions, and helping children label what they feel can make a huge difference. Talking about how emotions feel inside the body (e.g., a tight tummy when anxious or warm cheeks when happy) can help build their emotional awareness. Films like *Inside Out* can be a fun and engaging way to bring these conversations to life.





Exploring Feelings Through Different Methods

Not all children feel comfortable talking about their emotions face-to-face. They may prefer:

- Drawing how they feel
 - Sending a text or writing it down
 - Role-playing with toys
 - Discussing how characters in stories might be feeling
- Encouraging different ways to express emotions can make it easier for them to open up.

Giving Them Time

Some children may not want to talk right away, and that's okay. Let them know that they can come to you when they feel ready. Patience and understanding are key.

Quality Time and Fun Activities

Many children with SEND spend a lot of time masking their emotions, which can be exhausting. Spending time together doing something enjoyable—whether it's baking, crafting, walking in nature, or playing a favourite game—can help them relax and provide natural opportunities for conversation and connection.

Your support makes all the difference.

Thank you for being there for your children and for helping them build a strong foundation for positive mental health.

