

Social Use of Language Introduction

Being able to identify not only our own emotions, but the emotions of others is a vital aspect of communication. Children who struggle with the social use of language can find it difficult to recognise and identify emotions and may not have the vocabulary to appropriately communicate how they are feeling. It is vital that we give them the vocabulary of emotion. They should be given the opportunity to explore their emotions in a safe and secure environment and identify how each emotion makes them feel. It is useful for us as adults to name and identify their emotions as they are experiencing them to expose them to the language of emotions.

'I can see you are happy because you are smiling and laughing and jumping up and down with excitement.'

By giving them this vocabulary, we are supporting children in being able to express themselves appropriately. When someone is unable to use their language to communicate how they are feeling it can result in them displaying emotions outwardly in their behaviour, which may not be appropriate or acceptable.

Having appropriate emotional vocabulary allows us to build stronger relationships with our family and our peers.



Anxiety at school assembly

Tom was feeling anxious.

He was anxious, because on Mondays his class had to go to school assembly. He hated it because of all the noise and all that sitting. People came to talk at the assemblies. Tom couldn't concentrate on what they were saying, because he usually felt so fidgety and anxious. Sometimes his hands were sweating and he needed to move around. When he moved about, whoever was sitting beside him looked at him crossly or sometimes said, *'Shhhh!'* Then he felt even more anxious and uncomfortable.



Tom didn't know what to do. Sometimes he felt like he might cry.

'What is the matter with you, Tom?' said Sarah who sat beside him in class, *'You look sad.'*

Tom didn't want to tell her because he felt that nobody would understand. But, he did tell her.....

Sarah said, *'Oh Tom, you shouldn't worry. Everybody feels a bit anxious in the assembly hall. Here are some things that I have found useful when I felt anxious.'*

- 1. While in class, talk to the teacher about how you feel in assemblies.*
- 2. In the hall, sit beside a friend. Keep each other company and smile.*
- 3. If you feel fidgety, why not move your toes and fingers, squeeze a stress ball, or sit on a cushion.'*

Tom took Sarah's advice and felt relieved. He didn't believe how quickly he started to feel more comfortable.

He spoke to his teacher first.

He stayed close to friends.

He wriggled his toes and fingers, squeezed a stress ball and sometimes he sat on a cushion.

He thanked his friend for her good advice. Now Tom follows the same 3 steps any time he feels anxious in the assembly hall or in the classroom. When he does that, he feels a lot calmer and content.

Visit to the dentist

Gillian was lying in bed and she didn't want to get up. Today was the day she had to go to the dentist and she was terrified. She didn't really know what she was scared of, but she was really scared. She had been frightened of dentists ever since she was a very young child. She thought about hiding under the bedclothes. But that wasn't the answer.

'Gillian! Come on! Get up! We're going to be late!' called Mum.

Reluctantly, Gillian got up and had breakfast. She brushed her teeth thoroughly. She put on her coat and boots before she left the house. Along the way, Mum talked about the weather and about what they would buy in town, but Gillian barely heard her. She was too busy fretting and worrying, as she kicked the leaves on the pavement. Her stomach felt sick.



She walked slowly, trying to avoid a place that caused her to be terrified. Outside the dentists' she could see a little child coming out, holding her mother's hand and smiling.

'Hurry up!' Mum begged.

'Oh, well', thought Gillian, *'if that little girl can smile after being at the dentists', maybe it's not too bad at all!*

She sat in the waiting room with Mum. By this time, her hands were sweating. She just looked down at the floor. A door opened and a lady came out, calling her name. Gillian had butterflies in her tummy. She could see poor Gillian and she knew what the problem was.

'I think that you are nervous, Gillian. Mum can come into the room and meet Lena, the dentist. We can talk to Lena. She has a daughter your age and she is keen to meet you. Will we go and see her?'

Lena had short brown curly hair. She had the biggest smile. At first, Gillian was reluctant to talk, but then she chatted about school and sports. She sat up on the comfy seat, but held on tightly to her Mum's hand. Gillian opened her mouth and Lena was very impressed with her clean white teeth. The big light above helped Lena to see inside, and Gillian loved seeing the reflections on Lena's goggles. Lena explained what dentists do and how they use banana gel if children need more work on their teeth. She explained the little silvery noisy instruments. She asked Mum if she wanted to feel some of the things she uses. Mum held her hand out and felt the instrument that puffs air and the noisy one that polishes teeth. Mum felt them and burst out laughing. Gillian knew that being at the dentists' wasn't as terrifying as she had thought. Now that she was older, she was enjoying finding out more about what Lena did.

'All done for today, Gillian!' said Lena, *'Thanks for coming in to see me. Maybe you'll come back another day and you can tell me more about your school?'*

Gillian waved at Lena and said she would. On the way home, she looked up and around her, happy. *'Lena is the loveliest dentist!'* she said. *'I didn't have a thing to worry about.'*

Gillian thought about the little girl who had come out of the dentists' before her. Now she knew why she was smiling.

Afterwards, she couldn't believe that she had been so worried and afraid. Now that she understood what Lena did, she would never mind visiting her again.