



A to Z of Mental Health and Wellbeing

for age groups: 3–6 years and 7–12 years.

Dr. Swati Popat Vats

A

Amygdala

- Ages 3-6:** The amygdala is a small part inside your brain that helps you feel big emotions like scared or excited. It's like your brain's alarm bell- when something surprises you, it goes 'DING!' to let you know."
- Ages 7-12:** The amygdala is a part of your brain that notices danger and helps you feel emotions like fear, anger, or excitement. It gets your body ready to fight, run, or freeze when something feels scary or stressful.



B

Brain Chemicals

- Ages 3-6:** Your brain has tiny helpers called chemicals that help you feel happy, sleepy, or calm. Playing, sleeping, and hugs help your brain feel good!
- Ages 7-12:** Brain chemicals like dopamine and serotonin affect your mood and energy. You can boost them by exercising, getting sleep, eating healthy food, or doing something fun and meaningful.



C

Calm Corner

- Ages 3-6:** A quiet, cozy spot where you can go when you feel mad or sad. There might be pillows, books, or toys to help you feel better.
- Ages 7-12:** A calm corner is a space where you can take a break to breathe, think, or cool down when you're overwhelmed. It helps you manage big emotions safely and quietly.



D

Dance (and Your Spine)

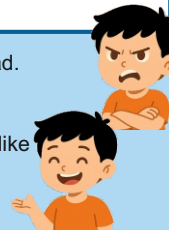
- Ages 3-6:** Dancing is fun and helps your body feel strong. It helps your back (your spine) stay wiggly and happy, and it makes your brain feel good too!
- Ages 7-12:** Dancing moves your spine and helps your brain release happy chemicals. It's a great way to improve your mood, stretch your body, and feel more connected to how you move.



E

Emotions (Recognize & Label Them)

- Ages 3-6:** We all have feelings like happy, mad, or sad. When you say how you feel- 'I feel mad'- you can get help to feel better.
- Ages 7-12:** Recognizing and naming your emotions- like frustrated, excited, or nervous- helps you understand what your body and brain need. It also helps others support you better.



F

Feelings Check (Instead of Attendance)

- Ages 3-6:** Before we start our day, let's check in: Are you feeling happy, sleepy, or maybe a little sad? It's okay to feel lots of things!
- Ages 7-12:** Instead of just saying 'here' in the morning, we ask 'How are you feeling today?' It helps us notice our emotions and support each other from the start of the day.



G

Gut-Brain Connection

- Ages 3-6:** Sometimes when your tummy feels funny, it's because you're nervous or excited- not just hungry! Your belly and brain are best friends and talk to each other all the time. Eat healthy to keep them both happy
- Ages 7-12:** The brain and stomach are connected. That's why you might feel butterflies in your tummy when you're anxious. Healthy eating, water, and rest help both your gut and brain feel good.



H

Healthy Habits

- Ages 3-6:** Eating without screens, keeping the 'sugar monster' under control, and sleeping early help your body and brain feel strong and happy!
- Ages 7-12:** Getting enough sleep, eating nutritious food, moving your body, and taking screen breaks are habits that protect your mental health and help your brain focus.



I

"I"-Messages

- Ages 3-6:** When you feel something, you can say it like this: 'I feel sad when my toy is taken.' It helps others understand how you feel.
- Ages 7-12:** Using 'I-messages' like 'I feel upset when I'm not heard' helps you express feelings clearly and kindly, without blaming others.



J

Just Right Challenges

- Ages 3-6:** Trying things that are a little tricky- like zipping your clothes- helps your brain grow strong! It's okay to need help and keep trying.
- Ages 7-12:** When a task feels hard but not impossible, that's a just-right challenge. These moments grow your brain and build your confidence.



K

Keep Talking

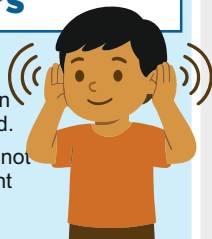
- Ages 3-6:** If something feels yucky or confusing, tell a grown-up. Talking helps make big feelings smaller.
- Ages 7-12:** Bottling up emotions can make you feel worse. Talking to someone you trust helps you find solutions and feel supported.



L

Listening Ears

- Ages 3-6:** When you use your listening ears, you can hear how others feel- and it helps you be a kind friend.
- Ages 7-12:** Active listening means paying attention, not interrupting, and trying to understand. It's an important skill for building strong friendships and trust.



M

Mindfulness

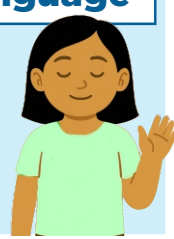
- Ages 3- 6:** You can listen to your breathing or feel your feet on the floor. That helps your body calm down."
- Ages 7- 12:** Mindfulness means paying close attention to the present moment without judgment. It helps you manage stress, focus better, and understand your feelings more clearly.



N

Non-Judgmental Language

- Ages 3- 6:** We don't say someone is 'bad'- we talk about what happened. Like, 'Throwing blocks is not safe.'
- Ages 7- 12:** Use words that talk about behaviour, not who someone is. Instead of 'You're mean,' say, 'That action hurt my feelings.' It helps solve problems without blame.



O

Opportunities for Reflection

- Ages 3- 6:** After something happens, we can think: 'How did that make me feel? What can I do next time?'
- Ages 7- 12:** Reflection helps you learn from your actions. Ask yourself: 'What happened? How did I feel? What could I do differently next time?'



P

Positive Affirmations

- Ages 3- 6:** Say nice things to yourself, like: 'I am strong. I can try again.' That helps your brain feel happy!
- Ages 7- 12:** Positive affirmations like 'I am capable' or 'I can stay calm' build confidence and help rewire your brain to believe in your abilities.



Q

Question Your Thoughts

- Ages 3- 6:** Sometimes we feel like hitting or screaming. You can ask: 'will it help me?'
- Ages 7- 12:** When you feel anxious or down, pause and ask: 'Is this thought helpful or hurtful? Is it based on facts?' This helps you build stronger thinking habits.



R

Regulate Your Emotions

- Ages 3- 6:** When you're upset, take a deep breath, count to five, or ask for help. That's how we calm our big feelings.
- Ages 7- 12:** Emotional regulation means noticing your feelings, understanding why you feel that way, and choosing a healthy response- like journaling, walking, or using calming strategies.



S

Safe Spaces

- Ages 3- 6:** A safe space is a quiet corner or a hug from someone who cares. It's where you can rest and feel okay again.
- Ages 7- 12:** Safe spaces- physical or emotional- are places or people where you can be yourself and talk about your feelings without fear.



T

Tummy Breathing

- Ages 3- 6:** Put your hands on your belly. Breathe in through your nose like you're smelling a flower. Blow out like you're blowing bubbles. That helps calm you down.
- Ages 7- 12:** Deep breathing that reaches your belly signals your brain to relax. Try 4-4-4 breathing: breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, out for 4.



U

Understanding Differences

- Ages 3- 6:** We all like different things. Some friends like noise, others like quiet. That's okay- we all belong.
- Ages 7- 12:** Everyone's brain and feelings work in their own way. Understanding others' experiences helps build empathy and stronger friendships.



V

Voice Your Needs

- Ages 3- 6:** It's okay to say, 'I don't like this' or 'I need a hug.' Grown-ups can help when you use your words.
- Ages 7- 12:** Learning to speak up for yourself- like asking for help, space, or clarification- is a powerful way to care for your mental wellbeing.



W

Wellbeing

- Ages 3- 6:** Feeling good in your body is called wellbeing. Play, eat, rest, and talk about your feelings to stay well.
- Ages 7- 12:** Wellbeing means taking care of your body, mind, and emotions. Exercise, healthy food, good sleep, and emotional support all help you feel your best.



X

X-tra Support and X-Factor

- Ages 3- 6:** Some kids need extra help- and that's okay. Everyone has something special inside!
- Ages 7- 12:** Everyone needs support sometimes. And you have your own 'X-Factor'- your unique strengths that help you shine. Knowing this builds self-esteem.



Y

You Are Valued: You Matter

- Ages 3- 6:** You are special just the way you are. You are important to us.
- Ages 7- 12:** Your voice matters. You are important to this world. When you believe in your worth, it helps you face challenges with courage



Z

Zones of Regulation

- Ages 3- 6:** We use colours to show how we feel- blue for sad, green for happy, yellow for nervous, red for angry or upset. Let's sing the emotions song.
- Ages 7- 12:** The Zones of Regulation help you identify your emotional state using colour zones, and choose strategies to return to the 'green zone' where you feel focused and calm.

