



Dear BCA parents,

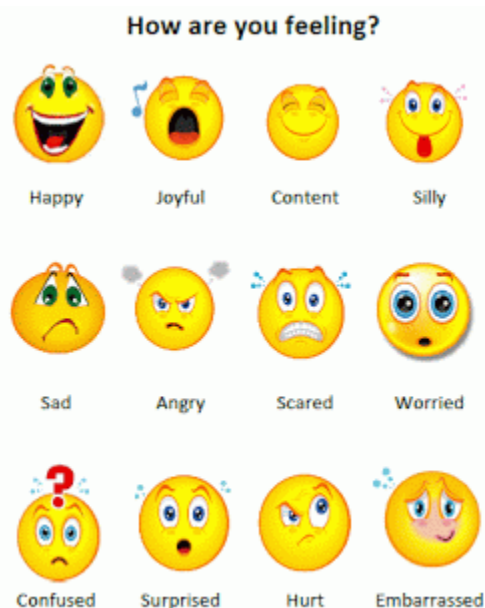
Happy week 3! I hope everyone is getting into the swing of online learning. I have heard wonderful things from teachers about the learning that is taking place already. I am so proud of our student's ability to be risk-takers and be open-minded!

The focus for this week's letter is regarding stress and anxiety. It is no secret that with school beginning, stress and anxiety levels can escalate in children and parents. It is important to address these feelings and take steps to find balance amongst the challenges.

How to identify when you are feeling stressed or anxious?

Sometimes children do not always know that they are feeling "stressed" or "anxious". However, typically children can identify that something is not normal. Once you can identify the emotion, you can better take steps to address the feeling. Here are a few ways to identify emotions:

-Help your child name the feeling. It may be helpful to have a chart that displays different feelings.



-Try to remember that behind every behavior is an emotion. A child may appear upset and frustrated but ultimately may be feeling anxious over a class assignment.

-Talk about "expected" ways for emotions to be expressed. Here is a good chance to give an example of what you do as a parent when you are feeling stressed (i.e. read a book, go for a walk, listen to music, etc.)

-Body scans are also a great way to identify where in our bodies we are feeling that emotion. For example, when we carry stress or anxiety, we often feel tightness in our chest or throat which is our bodies way of telling us we are stressed. Here is a resource that helps guide you through doing a body scan: <https://www.mindful.org/body-scan-kids/>

-Read books about feelings. Recommendations will be added at the end.

What can I do now that I know I am feeling stressed or anxious?

Just like how it takes practice to succeed at playing piano or soccer, using coping skills effectively also takes practice. An important tip is that students need to be taught how to use coping skills, and guidance from parents is often critical. Here are some ideas on how to address stress and anxiety:

-Use grounding exercises. Grounding exercises use our 5 senses to focus all our attention and energy onto those senses. The goal is to zone out distractions that are going on around us and calm our minds.

-Create a break place within the home. This place in the home should be a fun and exciting place that children enjoy going to. This space could be filled with books, fidgets, a journal, or whatever the student enjoys. A tip would be to also have a timer in this space and allow your child a set number of minutes to spend in the space.

-Discuss breathing techniques. Breathing controls a lot of how our bodies and mind respond to situations. If we can control our breathing, our brain will also become centered and in a calm state.

Here are resources that discuss these strategies further:

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/calming-anxiety>

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/how-to-deal-with-stress>

Caution this resource contains links to YouTube videos

<https://sites.google.com/apps.district279.org/virtualcalmingroom/home>

Book recommendations:

The Feeling Flower

The Way I Feel

Listening to My Body

When My Worries Get Too Big

Hey Warrior

It's Okay To Make Mistakes

Have a great week!

Mrs. Mason