

What is our Common Language?

Words and phrases we use

‘Common language’ refers to the words and phrases we use to talk about emotional needs, wellbeing and pro-social ways of working. This shared language allows all people, including parents, carers, school staff, social workers, health professionals, staff in children’s centres and children’s services to communicate with confidence and to contribute more fully to discussions. Some examples below.

Word/Phrase	Definition/Meaning
Achieving	To know that you can succeed and go on succeeding with time, patience and practice. Understanding that you can learn from failure to increase knowledge and skills. To recognise the achievement of others, challenge yourself to improve and help those less able than you to learn
Adapting to the environment	When children/young people’s behaviour changes in small ways to help them to cope and feel safe in the situation they find themselves. Children are not aware that they have made these changes. Some changes are helpful while other changes can cause children/young people difficulties when they find themselves in different social settings like school, activities or clubs outside school, or at the park.
Adventure	Doing something new and exciting; stepping outside your ‘comfort zone’; taking calculated, age-appropriate risks. Being able to be creative
Agency	Having a sense that you can have some influence over your life & can bring about change.
Assets	The strengths and qualities a child/young person may have that increases their social capital and their potential for positive long-term outcomes
Autonomy	The condition of self-government, or independence. The freedom to manage yourself & make your own decisions - Allows for interdependence
Belonging	A place where someone feels part of the group, where everyone feels welcome and included
Communication style	How you speak to others, your tone of voice and what your body is ‘saying’, sometimes without realising
Clarify	To make something clear or easier to understand by giving or asking for more information
Connect	When there is a high degree of trust and people come together in a verbal or non-verbal communication
Co-regulation	Helping each other to maintain a positive state of mind. The simplest way of communicating when one person responds to the actions of another; just enjoying time together with no goal or task in mind and neither being in control
Cultural safety	A policy of ensuring respect for cultural and social differences. This requires cultural humility where everyone shows respectful interest and curiosity in the culture of others

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Emotional safety	A space where children/young people feel able to be honest, open and show vulnerability because they experience emotional warmth, trust and safety
Empowerment	The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling your life and taking up opportunities
First person	Making 'I' statements to help others regulate: " I like the way you..."
Generosity	Freely sharing or giving of yourself or your possessions. Not taking more than your share
High empathy	Showing understanding of how others may be feeling and doing this to a high degree when someone is upset
High guidance	Helping others think about a good way to move something forward/make something better/repair a relationship following a disagreement
Hold in mind	When someone: (i) is interested in you (ii) cares about you enough to think about things that would be good for you/make your life better (iii) thinks about you even when they are not with you and lets you know. <i>When you are 'held in someone's mind', you learn that you are an individual in your own right, separate from others, with your own mind and ideas that are different from others</i>
Independence	Not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion, conduct, etc.; thinking or acting for oneself. Rejecting help or support from other people; refusing to be under obligation to others/owing someone something. Being separate from others
Interdependence	The dependence of 2 or more people on each other; mutually beneficial. Model for healthy adult relationships with strong, secure attachments
Mastery	Having developed a high level of knowledge or skill in an area following much practice and repetition; the idea of learning from mistakes
Name emotions	Use the correct word to assist with describing the emotion – use as many words for as many emotions as possible
Offering guidance	Helping children/young people think of ways to make amends, make something better, do something differently to improve the situation or avoid a problem situation in the future
Physical safety	Somewhere that children/young people's physical needs for food, water, shelter, warmth are met
Purpose	Having a reason to do something and having a positive focus. Having a sense of determination to do something. Having a sense that you are part of something bigger. Showing generosity and service to others
Reciprocal relationships	Relationships when two people feel the same way about each other, give similar things to each other and benefit equally from their relationship
Regulating emotions	Being able to manage your emotions when you feel upset; to be able to calm or soothe yourself when something causes you upset
Regulating physical state	Being able to soothe yourself - adjust your heart rate, reduce the amount of stress hormone in your body; slow the speed of any physical movement; reduce speed and pitch of your voice

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Resilience	The ability to recover quickly from difficulties in your life and to be able to manage and learn from situations
Word/Phrase	Definition/Meaning
Restore	Repair a relationship/friendship following a disagreement. Make amends following a disagreement; repair an object or situation
Safe adults	Are reliable, consistent and fair, and put the interests of children/young people first
Safe spaces	Home/classroom/school/club – are supportive with no sarcasm, bullying or shaming
Self efficacy	Is a 'Belief in your own power to cope with challenges' (Albert Bandura). This quality is most highly associated with resilience
Agency	Having a sense that you can have some influence over your life & can bring about change.
'Sense of self'	How you think about yourself, depending on how others view you, and how important the view of others is to you. Recognising your own strengths and weaknesses. Develops when someone else 'holds you in mind'
Service	Giving of yourself in support of others. Working towards a goal which benefits others, and the greater good
Social capital	The network of adults around children/young people and the relationships they have with them that can help children/young people achieve their goals. Helping children to learn how to build relationships and networks that increases social capital
Stable base	A space where you feel safe and secure and where you can express your vulnerabilities
Validate feelings	Acknowledge or recognise the feelings of others when they are upset. When someone does this for another, it helps that person to feel that it is normal to feel that way – that they are not mad, bad or stupid for feeling that way
Wellbeing	The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy