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1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

***Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week - 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021***

***The theme this year is 'Express Yourself'!***

**What is Self-Expression and why is it important?**

Self-expression is about communicating your individuality. This can be through words, clothing and hairstyle, or through art forms such as writing, drawing, music and dance. Self-expression can help you to showcase your true self – your story, your thoughts, feelings and emotions. But this can also make us feel vulnerable, so we might want to take things one step at a time. We often get told by our family, friends, school, communities and through social media how we 'should' look, think, speak, and act. These constant messages about what we ought to do, and who we ought to be, can make it difficult to let go of expectations and express our true selves.

**Self Expression Helps us Connect to our True Self**

Self-expression is a great way to relieve yourself of stress and free your mind. Self-expression can help you to reflect on your life, actions, decisions, relationships, beliefs, and thoughts — rather than keep them buried deep down.

## **Self Expression Helps us connect to each other – in good times and bad**

By expressing ourselves thoughtfully, we can better communicate, collaborate and build a community with others. At times of crisis, people come together to express themselves individually, and as a group, through the arts.

### **Activity Ideas**

We can use different ideas, mediums and art forms to encourage self-expression in our children. Even if they don't think of themselves as creative, it's important to create an environment that encourages children to explore and be playful so that they can express themselves freely and without judgement. This is not about producing great art or performance. This is about helping children and young people to connect with their true selves and to others. Mediums and art forms you may consider include: simple craft making, sculpture, junk modelling, mask making, murals, weaving, painting, photography, film, digital art, dance, drama, mime, poetry and literature, music, singing, gardening and cooking. But there are lots more to choose from.

### **Dress to Express**

Making a choice about our appearance is a clear way of expressing ourselves and so we will be holding a 'Dress to Express' day on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and would like to encourage the children to express themselves through their clothes, hair etc. Pupils could wear their favourite colour or choose a range of colours that express how they're feeling. Colour can be very personal and mean different things to different people, so this is a great opportunity to encourage self-expression and celebrate a diverse range of emotions.

Kind regards



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