



# **Teacher's Guide: 5th & 6th Class**

# Contents

Programme Overview.....	3
Wellbeing in Schools.....	3
Programme Components .....	5
Using the Programme.....	6
Yearly Scheme .....	9
Learning Module 1: Uniquely Me .....	10
Learning Module 5: Flipping Our Lids.....	15

## Programme Overview

Folens *My Wellbeing Diary* is an evidence-based programme with a strong emphasis on daily mindful practice. Wellbeing is defined as feeling good about yourself and the world around you, and functioning well in everyday life. It includes having good mental health, the ability to show resilience and coping skills and the ability to 'bounce back' when faced with the typical stresses and challenges of life.

Wellbeing encompasses:

- Proper sleep, diet and exercise
- Relationships, social connections and altruism
- Meaningful and purposeful activity and a sense of mastery
- The ability to regulate emotions and behaviour
- Healthy and helpful thinking skills
- Kindness to self and others
- Adopting a growth rather than fixed mindset
- The ability to adapt and bounce back

*My Wellbeing Diary* fosters all of the above concepts through a combination of mindful meditation videos, daily diary entries and learning modules. As with healthy eating and exercise, it is important that wellbeing is continuously worked on and engaged with in order for the individual to experience lasting benefit.

## Wellbeing in Schools

The PDST states that 'Schools and centres for education in Ireland play a vital role in the promotion of wellbeing through a range of activities and approaches to support the academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children and young people.' The Department of Education launched the revised Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice in October 2019. Every school and centre for education is required by 2023 to use the School Self-Evaluation process to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle. (<https://ncca.ie/media/4456/ncca-primary-curriculum-framework-2020.pdf>)

The HSE suggests that in order to promote whole-school wellbeing, schools should be:

1. Developing and maintaining a safe, caring culture within the school to foster a sense of belonging.
2. Building positive relationships between teachers and children.
3. Adopting a whole-school approach to health promotion.
4. Actively involving children, their parents/guardians and the wider community in developing and implementing school policies to support mental health and health promotion.
5. Supporting and implementing a well-planned, consistent and integrated SPHE curriculum to enable children to enhance their coping and problem-solving skills.
6. Developing whole-school systems and structures to support the early identification of children experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties.
7. Actively involving, supporting and encouraging children's participation in extra-curricular activities.

8. Fostering a whole-school ethos that accepts and values diversity within the pupil and staff population.
9. Providing easy access to information for pupils and staff on supports available to them within the school and wider community.
10. Facilitating access to continuing professional development for school staff on the promotion of the mental health and well-being of children.

<https://assets.gov.ie/41246/9a328ba4ecde44489eb9e686876041e3.pdf>

In addition to the above, wellbeing is now listed as one of the seven competencies within the new draft primary curriculum framework published by the NCCA in 2020.

*'This competency develops children's appreciation and demonstration of wellbeing and their ability to be as physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually healthy as they can be. It fosters self-awareness and promotes the importance of children seeing themselves as capable and resourceful. This supports their ability to deal with the normal challenges of life, become resilient and cope in a variety of situations and circumstances.*

*It contributes to children's demonstration of how they can be physically healthy through physical activity, eating healthy food and self-care. It helps children become positive and engaged in their learning and realise their own uniqueness and potential. It supports healthy relationships with themselves, their peers, their family and the wider world.'*

<https://ncca.ie/media/4456/ncca-primary-curriculum-framework-2020.pdf>



## Programme Components

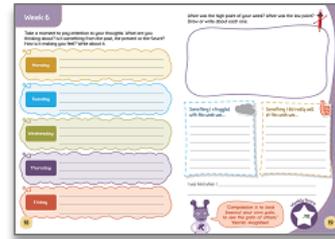
The 5th & 6th class programme for *My Wellbeing Diary* consists of the following components:

### Pupil Book

The pupil book consists of both daily diary pages and learning module pages:

#### Diary pages

The diary pages require children to identify how they feel on a particular day and to colour or draw the emoji that best reflects how they feel. They also feature wellbeing 'challenges' and short writing activities.

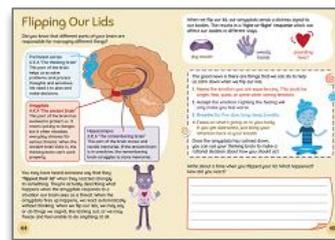


Diary pages

On Fridays, children are prompted to reflect and write about how they feel, identify things they are grateful for and set a wellbeing goal for the coming week.

#### Learning Module pages

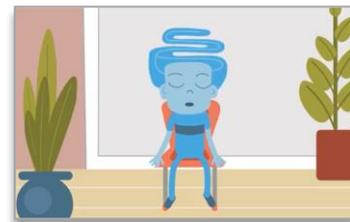
There are 10 learning modules (one for each month) covering different aspects of wellbeing.



Learning module pages

### Meditation Videos

There are five daily meditation videos for 5th & 6th Class – *Belly Breathing Practice*, *Body Scan Meditation*, *Leaves on a Stream*, *Breath as Anchor Meditation* and *Loving Kindness Meditation*. The purpose of each video is to encourage mindfulness, make children more aware of their own thoughts and feelings and create a sense of calm before a day of lessons. (Note: There is also a *Belly Breathing Instruction* video for use at the start of the year to demonstrate how belly breathing works.)



Meditation video

### PowerPoint Presentations

There are 10 PowerPoint presentations which accompany the 10 learning modules. They can be used by the teacher to support instruction by introducing topics and concepts in a visual way.



PowerPoint

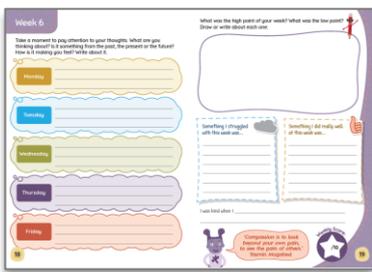
### Teacher's Guide

The Teacher's Guide contains curriculum information as well as detailed lesson plans for each of the learning modules, including teacher prompts, circle time and classroom activity suggestions.

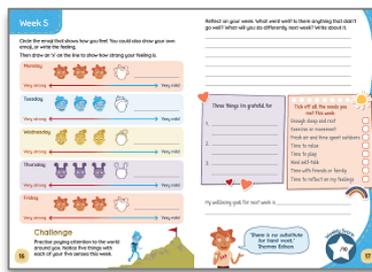
# Using the Programme

## Diary Pages

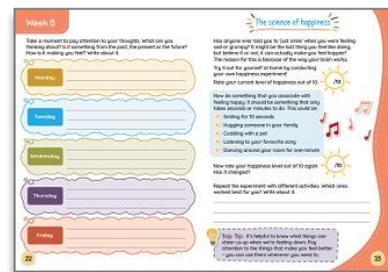
The diary pages of *My Wellbeing Diary* are designed to be used daily in conjunction with the meditation videos. Teachers have the freedom to decide how to use the resources in a way that best suits their class (e.g. meditation directly followed by diary entry every morning *or* meditation in the morning and diary entry in the afternoon). The first diary page for each week requires the children to identify how they are feeling each day. Children need to learn to recognise and name their emotions in order to be able to regulate them. More time can be spent on the second diary pages which can be completed on Friday. These diary pages alternate and either require the children to reflect on and write about their feelings or complete a unique activity that reinforces some of the concepts covered in the learning modules.



Diary pages: Type 1



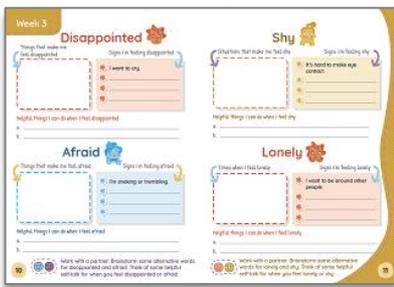
Diary pages: Type 2



Diary pages: Type 3

## Feelings PowerPoint and diary pages

Some children may struggle to identify the emotions that they experience. To support them, teachers can spend the first four weeks of the year helping children recognise and label different emotions. They can use the Feelings PowerPoint and diary pages 6–13 to do this before students complete the daily diary entries in September.



Feelings diary pages

## Meditation Videos

These simple videos are approximately 5 minutes long and are designed to be used every day in class. These meditations can be carried out in the classroom or during circle time, seated or lying on the floor, and require no additional equipment. Teachers can alternate between the videos depending on what best suits their class.

**Belly Breathing Instruction:** The purpose of this video is to introduce children to the concept of belly breathing and to demonstrate how this type of breathing can be used.

**Belly Breathing Practice:** Once children have grasped the basics of belly breathing, they can then use the *Belly Breathing Practice video*. Learning to belly breathe is an important skill for children as it calms the body and mind, thus encouraging emotional self-regulation.

*Body Scan Meditation:* This body scan is an effective way to engage in mindful meditation practice. It encourages children to step out of their mind and pay attention to how their body is feeling in the present. The goal is to train the mind to become more aware of sensory experience, build focus and be fully present in their lives.

*Breath as Anchor Meditation:* As an alternative to the Body Scan Meditation, children can use their breath as an anchor or point of focus during mindful meditation.

*Leaves on a Stream:* This video is a basic thought diffusion exercise. In learning to recognise that they are the observer of their thoughts and not the thoughts themselves, it encourages children to detach from and let go of thoughts that might be causing pain or anxiety. In the video, children are asked to visualise their thoughts as leaves sailing down a stream and then disappearing. In doing so, they learn to take a step back and avoid getting ‘caught up’ in negative thoughts to the point where they lose perspective.

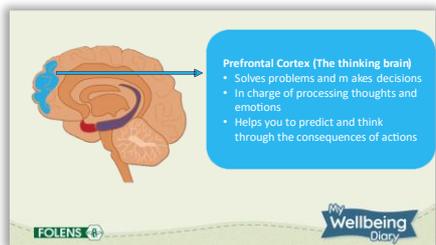
*Loving-Kindness Meditation:* The purpose of this meditation is to increase empathy and develop self-acceptance, compassion and a sense of connection to others.

## Learning Modules

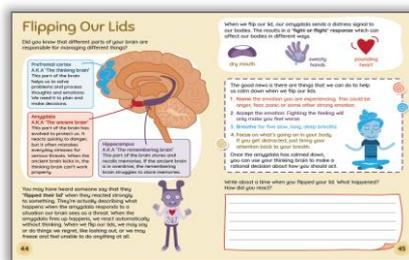
The 10 Learning Modules are designed to be used across the 10 months of the school year and cover the following concepts:

Month	Module	Concept
September	Uniquely Me	Develop identity and a sense of being a unique individual
October	What Makes a Family?	Understand that all families are unique, appreciate the way families change over time and the positive effect family can have on our wellbeing
November	New Friends, Old Friends	Develop a set of personal friendship values and understand the advantages and disadvantages of being in a friend group
December	Developing Empathy	Develop a greater sense of empathy
January	Flipping Our Lids	Understand the role the brain plays in how we respond to stressful events and develop techniques for staying calm
February	Thinking Traps	Develop a deeper understanding of the different types of negative thoughts and how they can be challenged and reframed
March	Managing Worry	Understand how to manage worries
April	Living Mindfully	Understand the benefits of practising mindfulness
May	A Healthy Balance	Understand the importance of healthy eating, sleep, exercise and recreation
June	Getting Social	Understand the importance of maintaining personal safety and a sense of perspective whilst using social media and the internet

For each module, there is an accompanying PowerPoint, which teachers can use to prompt discussion of the concepts. At the end of the lesson, children complete the relevant learning module pages in the diary.



Learning module PowerPoint slide



Learning module diary page

## Yearly Scheme

Month	Diary Pages/Learning Modules	Strand	Strand Unit
September	Learning Module 1: Uniquely Me	Myself	Self-identity
	Diary Pages: 6–13	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
		Myself and others	Relating to others
October	Learning Module 2: What Makes a Family?	Myself and others	Myself and my family
	Diary Pages: 16–23	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
November	Learning Module 3: New Friends, Old Friends	Myself	Growing and changing
		Myself and others	My friends and other people
	Diary Pages: 26–33	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
December	Learning Module 4: Developing Empathy	Myself and the wider world	Developing citizenship
	Diary Pages: 36–43	Myself	Growing and changing Self- Identity
		Myself and others	Relating to others
January	Learning Module 5: Flipping Our Lids	Myself	Growing and changing
	Diary Pages: 46–53	Myself	Growing and changing Self- Identity
		Myself and others	Relating to others
February	Learning Module 6: Thinking Traps	Myself	Taking care of my body Growing and changing
	Diary Pages: 56–63	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
March	Learning Module 7: Managing Worry	Myself	Taking care of my body Growing and changing
	Diary Pages: 66–73	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
April	Learning Module 8: Living Mindfully	Myself	Taking care of my body Growing and changing
	Diary Pages: 76–83	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
		Myself and others	Relating to others
May	Learning Module 9: A Healthy Balance	Myself	Taking care of my body Making decisions
	Diary Pages: 86–93	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
June	Learning Module 10: Getting Social	Myself	Safety and protection Making decisions
		Myself and the wider world	Media education

# Sample Lesson Plans

## Learning Module 1: Uniquely Me

### Overview

September	
<b>Strand:</b> Myself	<b>Strand Unit:</b> Self-identity
Objectives	Self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise and appreciate that each person is a unique individual and that this individuality is expressed in many different ways</li> </ul> Developing self-confidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>express personal opinions, feelings, thoughts and ideas with growing confidence</li> </ul>
<b>Strand:</b> Myself and others	<b>Strand Unit:</b> My friends and other people
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore how the opinions, views or expectations of others can influence how people relate to each other, either positively or negatively</li> </ul>
<b>Strand:</b> Myself and the wider world	<b>Strand Unit:</b> Media Education
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise unequal treatment of sexual roles and other issues in literature, advertising, drama, magazines and other media</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>My Wellbeing Diary D</i> (pp. 4–5)</li> <li>Learning Module 1 PowerPoint: Uniquely Me</li> </ul>
Learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PowerPoint Slide 2-4: children discuss what it means to be unique and how being different can sometimes attract negative attention</li> <li>Group activity: Children create a list of things that make each member of the group unique</li> <li>PowerPoint Slide 5: Children discuss the effect of gender stereotypes and how they can impact our self-identity</li> <li>Group activity: Children examine a list of traits and discuss whether they consider them to be 'masculine' or 'feminine'</li> <li>PowerPoint Slide 6: Children discuss the desire to fit in or to be considered 'normal'</li> <li>Class activity: Children participate in a whole-class celebration of themselves</li> <li>PowerPoint Slide 7: Children reflect on the things that make them unique</li> <li><i>My Wellbeing Diary C</i> (p. 4): Children fill in facts about themselves</li> <li><i>My Wellbeing Diary C</i> (p. 5): Children create a mindscape of themselves using the information they filled in on page 4</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher observation</li> <li>Diary pages (pp. 4–5)</li> </ul>
Integration	Literacy – oral language development; writing Visual arts – drawing

## Background Information

A unique identity and sense of individuality becomes more and more important for children as they reach the age of 12. Most children have a sense of self-understanding by the age of 11, but as children reach adolescence and begin to form stronger relationships with their peers, the need to answer the question ‘Who am I?’ grows stronger. This process takes time, but most children have developed a strong and stable sense of identity by the time they are in their late teens.

Many children will experience confusion around their identity at this time as they try to figure out and reconcile the different elements of their personalities. Some will have to choose from many different identities, while others will temporarily take on negative identities (such as ‘the bully’ or ‘the troublemaker’). Positive and encouraging role models in the form of parents, teachers and other significant adults can help children to achieve a positive sense of identity, which can aid in the development of self-esteem and confidence. Having a variety of interests and community/friend groups can also allow children to try out different identities to see what fits.

Gender stereotyping can also become a factor at this age as children become more aware of social norms and perceptions of what constitutes masculine and feminine behaviour. It is important to challenge these stereotypes as much as possible and provide children with examples of roles models who don’t conform to rigid gender norms.

In early adolescence children are less influenced by their families, which makes peer pressure a growing concern. Children with lower self-esteem tend to be more vulnerable to peer pressure.

## Detailed Notes

PowerPoint content	Teacher discussion prompts
<p><b>Slide 1</b></p> 	<p>Launch the PowerPoint for Learning Module 1: Uniquely Me</p>
<p><b>Slide 2</b></p> 	<p><b>Begin by asking children what they think it means to be ‘unique’.</b> What does the word ‘unique’ mean?</p> <p>Click to display the quotes about being unique, one at a time. After each quote, prompt discussion by asking questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think the author of the quote was trying to say?</li> <li>• Do you agree with this quote?</li> <li>• What makes one person different from another person?</li> </ul>

### Slide 3



Ask children, what are the things that make a person unique? Prompt for a wide range of answers. *E.g. our appearance, personal info, fingerprints, our interests and hobbies, hopes and dreams, etc.*

Click to reveal Pip and click to reveal some of the things that make Pip unique:

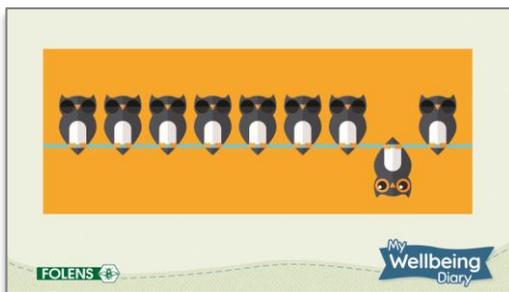
- Pip loves basketball, skateboarding and reading
- Pip's favourite foods are pizza and strawberries
- Pip is brave and loyal
- Pip wants to study engineering at University

Explain that these are the things that make Pip unique. Nobody else, including Pip's friends, family or classmates, has the exact same combination of likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, skills, passions, talents and life goals as Pip.

### Group Activity

Tell children to write down the names of each member of the group on one side of a page. On the other side of the page, they list three things about each member of the group. These could be personality traits, likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, goals etc. Explain that these three things are part of what makes each member of the group unique.

### Slide 4



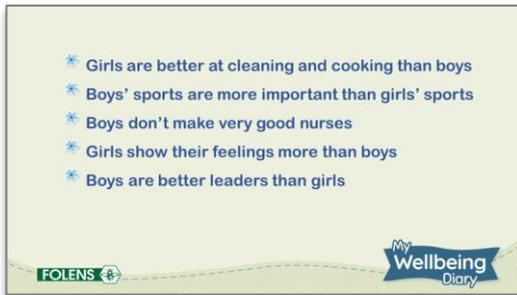
Ask children if they have a hobby or interest that they don't share with others, or if they have a friend or sibling who has a really unusual pastime or personality trait. Maybe a member of their family dresses very unusually and people have sometimes commented on it.

**Ask children why certain things may make someone seem more unique than others.** *E.g. because it is an unusual or rare interest, like stamp collecting; because it is something people associate it more with girls or boys, like a boy being very into fashion or a girl being sports-obsessed; because it is very visible or draws attention, like a very unusual way of dressing or very brightly coloured hair; because it is something they associate with an older or younger person.*

Ask children why they think others can be mean or make unkind comments about interests or traits like these? *E.g. because they have never seen them before, because people are intimidated by things they are unfamiliar with, because people have their own ideas about what is 'normal'*

Explain that **the world would be very boring if everyone was the same.** Point out that some very successful people were viewed as being different or 'weird' when they were young.

## Slide 5



Click to reveal the gender statements.

Designate one side of the room 'Agree' and the other side of the room 'Disagree'. Read each statement and tell children to stand in one or other side of the room, depending on whether they agree or disagree with the statement.

Afterwards, discuss the statements with children. Explain that **gender stereotyping means putting people into a category or presuming certain people are alike based on whether they are male or female**. Point out that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century women were not allowed to attend university or vote because it was thought they were not as clever as men. If men cared for children or did housework they were thought to be weak or 'soft'.

Explain that while we have made a lot of progress, gender stereotyping still exists.

Google 'Girls toys' and display the images that appear to the class. Ask children what they notice. *E.g. the toys are all pink, there are a lot of dolls and babies*. Point out that while there are lots of young girls who like to play with dolls, there are also girls who like to play with cars and lego. But these toys aren't really marketed to girls.

Now do the same for 'Boy toys' and ask children what they notice. *E.g. the toys are lots of different colours, there are lots of cars, trucks, building equipment*.

Explain to children that **when toy manufactures market things specifically to each gender it encourages them to think there are greater differences between boys and girls than there are**. It promotes the idea that all girls are alike and that all boys are alike. The reality is a lot more nuanced than that.

Explain that **gender stereotyping can be very harmful because it pressurises people into behaving in a way that is not natural to them**.

## Group Activity

Organise children into groups and have them discuss whether they think the following traits are masculine or feminine and why:

Caring / loving

Competitive

Organised

Likes to gossip

Logical / rational

Emotional

## Slide 6



Click to reveal the phrases about wanting to be normal and fit in. Ask children if they have ever felt the need to change, in order to fit in. *E.g. by dressing, speaking or behaving in a way that wasn't natural.* How did it feel? Did it make them feel good, or bad about themselves?

Ask children why they think it sometimes seems easier to fit in or be 'just like everybody else'. Acknowledge that **being or feeling different from others can be difficult, but when we try act in a way that is not natural to us it can often make us feel uneasy.** Suppressing what makes you unique can lower your self-esteem. It's also hard to act a certain way all the time and other people can often sense when we are not being authentic.

## Classroom Activity

Have a whole class 'celebrate yourself' day – children could create images of themselves labelled with all the things that make them unique, share their proudest achievements with their group, bring in some of their favourite things to show or illustrate a word that they feel represents them and stick it to their desk. Encourage children to listen carefully to others and be supportive by using encouraging statements and phrases. Remind children that, in order to celebrate our own uniqueness, we must also welcome the differences we see in others.

## Slide 7



Ask children to reflect upon the things that make them unique this week. They could write a journal or diary entry about this thing or share and celebrate it with their family.

## My Wellbeing Diary D

Ask children to turn to pages 4 and 5 of *My Wellbeing Diary D*. Ask them to complete the sentences with information about themselves on page 4. Ask children to use this information to create a personal mindscape on page 5.

# Learning Module 5: Flipping Our Lids

## Overview

September	
<b>Strand:</b> Myself	<b>Strand Unit:</b> Growing and changing
Objectives	Feelings and emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acquire the ability and confidence to identify, discuss and explore a range of feelings, especially those that are difficult to express</li> <li>• discuss and practise how to express and cope with various feelings in an appropriate manner</li> <li>• understand how feelings help in understanding himself/herself</li> </ul>
<b>Strand:</b> Myself	<b>Strand Unit:</b> Making decisions
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and practise a simple decision-making strategy</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My Wellbeing Diary D</i> (pp. 44–45)</li> <li>• Learning Module 5 PowerPoint: Flipping Our Lids</li> </ul>
Learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint Slide 2: children discuss the phrase ‘flipping your lid’ and talk about a time when they ‘flipped their lids’, how they felt and how they reacted</li> <li>• PowerPoint Slides 3-7: children learn about different parts of the brain and their role in triggering a fight-or-flight response</li> <li>• PowerPoint Slide 8-10: children discuss different ways of calming themselves when they have ‘flipped their lids’ and reflect on what they have learned</li> <li>• Classroom activity: Children draw and label a picture of the brain</li> <li>• <i>My Wellbeing Diary C</i> (p. 44–45): Children read the text and write about a time when they ‘flipped their lid’</li> <li>• Extension activity: children make a plan for how they will handle their next fight-or-flight response</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation</li> <li>• Diary pages (p. 44–45)</li> </ul>
Integration	Literacy – oral language development; writing SESE – Science/Living things/Human life

## Background Information

We are all familiar with the phrase 'Flipping your lid'. In essence, it means we are so angry or upset we have lost all rational control and our behaviour is being driven purely by our emotions.

This sort of response usually results from part of our 'lower' brain (the amygdala) taking over from our 'higher' or thinking brain (the prefrontal cortex) because something has triggered a strong emotional response.

The amygdala is one of the most ancient structures in the brain. It evolved to recognise danger and to prepare our body to react to it – in other words, to fight or to run away (flight). The amygdala effectively acts as the body's alarm system. When it perceives a threat, the amygdala triggers a set of biological responses to help us survive. For example, our heart rate increases so that more blood flows to our muscles in case we need to fight or run away. As blood is diverted away from our digestive system to our muscles, our mouth become dry and we may get butterflies in our stomach.

Our prefrontal cortex sits at the front of the brain and is responsible for complex decision making and making sense of our emotions. However, when the amygdala is on high alert, the pathways to the prefrontal cortex shut down. We become somewhat disoriented. Our attention narrows and our thoughts race as we move to survival mode.

These reactions can be unhelpful in modern times as the stresses we face are rarely threats to our lives. Children, especially, can feel like their body has been hijacked and may not understand why they are experiencing such debilitating physical reactions.

As a result, it is important that children know that these are common reactions and understand why they occur. It is also important that they learn to recognise when their brain and body is reacting in this way, and to know what steps they can take to manage these potentially overwhelming sensations.

Children should be encouraged to take a step back from their feelings – in essence, to put a space between their impulses and their actions. It can be helpful for children to name or label the emotion that they are experiencing. Studies have shown that putting feelings into words can weaken the strength of the feeling and increase activity in the prefrontal cortex, helping the rational part of the brain to gain control once more. Once children have recognised and accepted that they are feeling anger, sadness, fear etc. they can set about calming themselves.

The key to calming the nervous system is through relaxation techniques or physical exercise. Deep abdominal breathing or belly breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. When you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. As a result, your heart rate and blood pressure decrease. Deep breathing is not just something children can do when they 'flip their lid' - children who are naturally disposed to higher levels of arousal, anger and anxiety can benefit from practising it regularly. Deep breathing can also help to take attention away from worries or fears that all children may have at times and quiet their minds.

You can find out more about 'flipping your lid' by watching the following videos:

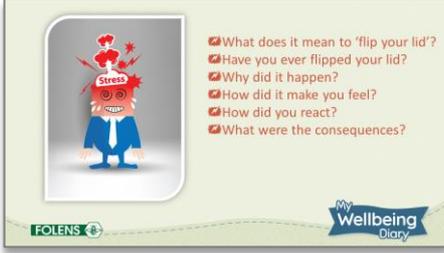
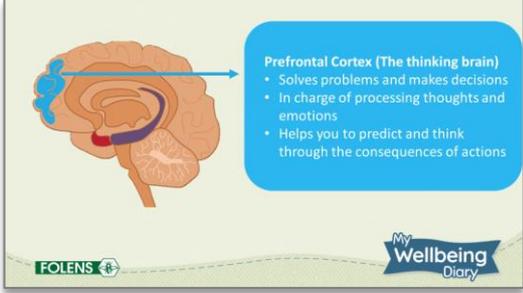
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>

<https://heartmindonline.org/resources/daniel-siegel-flipping-your-lid>

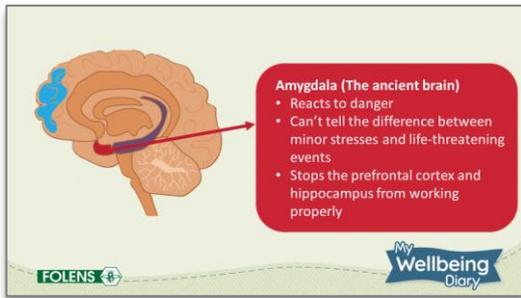
Children may also find the below video useful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bKuoH8CkFc>

## Detailed Notes

PowerPoint content	Teacher discussion prompts
<p><b>Slide 1</b></p> 	<p>Launch the PowerPoint for Learning Module 5: Flipping Our Lids</p>
<p><b>Slide 2</b></p> 	<p>Ask children the following questions as you click to reveal each bullet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever heard of the phrase ‘Flipping your lid’.</li> <li>• What does it mean? (<i>flipping your lid means losing control of your emotions. It means being so angry, upset or scared that you simply cannot think straight.</i>)</li> <li>• Have you ever ‘flipped your lid’?</li> <li>• Why did it happen?</li> <li>• How did it make you feel?</li> <li>• How did you react?</li> <li>• What were the consequences?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Slide 3</b></p> 	<p>Click to reveal the image of the brain. Explain that the brain has lots of different jobs. It controls and coordinates everything from the movement of our fingers to our heart rate.</p> <p>Point out that the brain also plays a crucial role in how we control and process our emotions.</p> <p>Click to reveal the label of the <b>Pre-frontal cortex</b>. Explain that <b>the Pre-frontal cortex is the thinking part of the brain</b>. It’s a bit like the Manager or Director of a company. It is involved in planning, decision-making, problem-solving and processing thoughts and emotions. So when we flip our lids, it’s because our prefrontal cortex is no longer in control! The prefrontal cortex is much bigger in humans (relatively speaking!) than it is in other animals because humans are more complex than other animals.</p>

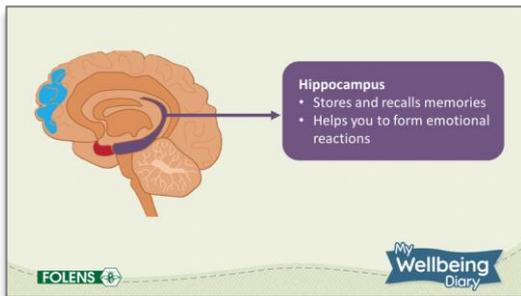
#### Slide 4



Click to reveal the label of the **Amygdala**

Explain that **the amygdala sits deep within the brain and is one of the most ancient parts of the brain**. The amygdala is very effective at detecting potential threats and reacts very quickly to danger. It's like the body's alarm system. **The amygdala triggers the 'fight-or-flight response' where the body gets ready to fight or to run away from danger**. This was very useful thousands of years ago when we might have been eaten by a wild animal or bitten by a snake. It's not as necessary today when we don't face as many physical threats!

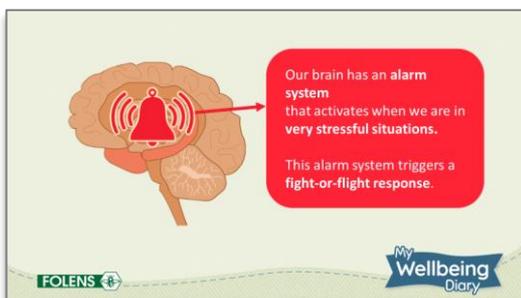
#### Slide 5



Click to reveal the label of the **Hippocampus**.

Explain that **the hippocampus is where our memories are stored. It also plays an important role in learning**. So when we flip our lids and are out of control emotionally, it also becomes much harder for us to remember and to learn.

#### Slide 6



Ask children if they know, or can guess, what the fight-or-flight response is. Allow time for children to give their answers.

Click to reveal the image and text.

**Explain that our brain has an alarm system that alerts us to stressful situations**. It tells our bodies to prepare for action. In other words, to fight, or to run away.

## Slide 7



Ask children if they know **what happens to our bodies when the flight-or-flight system is triggered**. *E.g. heart racing, dry mouth, butterflies in stomach, sweaty hands.*  
Click to reveal the images

Ask children if they have ever experienced these sensations or any others *E.g. hands trembling.*

Ask children **what happens in our minds during a fight-or-flight response** *E.g. mind racing, difficulty concentrating, thoughts stuck in our heads.*  
Click to reveal the images

Explain that these are all very normal responses and everyone experiences them from time to time. They are also very useful responses if we are actually in danger. For example, our hearts beat faster to send more blood to our muscles so that are ready to fight or to run as fast as we can.

The problem is that nowadays, we don't really face that many life-threatening situations. Unfortunately, the instinctive part of our brain can't immediately tell the difference, so it reacts the same way to situations that while stressful, are not life-threatening.

Ask children to name some events that could cause us to feel angry or anxious and trigger the fight-or-flight response *E.g. a fight with a friend or sibling, losing in a video game, a maths test, a class presentation etc.* You could make a list of events on the board.

## Slide 8



Ask children if they've ever noticed that when they calm down after flipping their lid, they might wonder why they were so angry or so anxious. What seemed like such a big deal at the time no longer seems as important as it did. They might still be angry or upset but they are not 'freaking out'.

Explain that this is because our pre-frontal cortex (our thinking brain) is back in control and we have a better perspective on things. Our emotions are no longer driving our behaviour.

**Explain that there are things that we can do to both help us keep our lids on(!) and to calm ourselves down if we have flipped our lids.** When we calm our body down, our pre-frontal cortex is able to function as it should.

Ask children if they can suggest what might help to calm us down and write these suggestions on the board. Then click to reveal the bullets and discuss these with the children. (Point out any of the suggestions that children identified themselves.)

### **Name the emotion ('Name it to tame it')**

When we flip our lids, it is imperative that we try and create some space between our impulses (*e.g. shout, cry, throw something*) and our actions. The first thing we can do is to name the emotion that we are experiencing (*e.g. anger, fear etc.*). This helps us to recognise that we have been emotionally hi-jacked and that we need to help our prefrontal cortex get back in control.

### **Accept the emotion**

It's important that we don't fight our feelings or blame ourselves for how we are feeling as this will result in us getting even more tangled up in our emotions. We should simply accept that these are emotions that everyone experiences from time to time.

### **Breathe**

When we breathe deeply it sends a message to our brain to calm down and relax. Taking five slow, deep, belly breaths and counting in and out as we breathe is the most effective way of calming our nervous systems.

### **Focus on your body**

Finally, we keep paying attention to our body and how it feels. We notice if our brain feels 'scrambled' or if our heart is beating fast. As we breathe, we keep paying attention to our body as we calm down.

## Slide 9



Finally, point out to children that everyone is different and there is more than one way to calm down. Other things that might be helpful include:

**Exercising:** this uses up the excess energy sent to our muscles during the fight-or-flight response and forces us to breathe deeply which calms us

**Using our senses to notice things around us:** this keeps us in the present moment and stops us from focusing on the negative thoughts that might be causing us distress

**Counting backwards from 10:** Counting back slowly from 10 is harder than counting up to 10! This forces our brain to pay attention to the numbers and gives our body time to calm down.

**Talk to someone:** Talking to someone we trust about how we are feeling can be useful because it forces us to name our emotions. It also allows to connect with another person which has a calming effect on the body.

Other ways to calm down include having a cold drink, running cold water over our hands, listening to music, going for a walk etc.

## Slide 10



Talk to children about what they have learned. Encourage them to try out different ways of calming down when they flip their lid or when they feel upset or anxious in any way.

## Class Activity

Have children draw a picture of the brain including the prefrontal cortex, amygdala and hippocampus. Have them label each part of the brain and describe what it does in their own words.

## My Wellbeing Diary D

Ask children to turn to pages 44 and 45 of *My Wellbeing Diary D*. Ask them to read the text on pages 44 and 45. Then ask write about a time when they flipped their lid.

### Extension Activity

Ask children to make a plan for what they will do the next time they 'flip their lid'. They can keep this at home somewhere they can see it or stick it in their journal so they have it to hand. You could use the following questions as the basis for the plan:

1. How will I know I am 'flipping my lid'? What feelings or physical sensations will I try to be on the lookout for? *(e.g. fast heartbeat, tight chest)*
2. How will I calm myself? *(e.g. take deep breaths, use my senses to... )*
3. What else could I do that would be helpful? *(e.g. step out of the room, tell someone else I am feeling anxious, take a break from what I am doing)*
4. What will I do when I feel calm again? *(e.g. run a quick body scan, write in my diary about how I felt)*