

CoMLP SEMH Outreach Online Training:

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING SOCIAL TIMES



CoMLP Outreach



CoMLP Outreach

The Importance of Play

Play improves the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and young people.

Through play, children learn about the world and themselves.

Rights Respecting schools – children have a right to play (Article 31).

They also learn skills they need for study, work and relationships such as:

- confidence
- self-esteem
- resilience
- interaction
- social skills
- independence
- curiosity

Physical play such as running, skipping and riding a bicycle helps children develop:

- good physical fitness
- agility
- stamina
- co-ordination
- balance

Developing social skills through play
Playing can help children develop their social skills with others.

By listening, paying attention and sharing play experiences, this helps a child:

- explore their feelings
- develop self-discipline
- learn how to express themselves
- work out emotional aspects of life

WHY ARE SOCIAL TIMES DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN WITH SEMH NEEDS?

Playtimes can be particularly difficult for children with specific needs such as Autism especially, but can apply to all children with various SEMH needs as every child is unique.

- **UNSTRUCTURED TIME** - some children like no demands and others struggle with the decision making as no one is guiding them with what to do.
- **SENSORY OVERLOAD** - Playgrounds are full of sights, sounds, noise, movement, touch etc
- **SOCIAL DEMANDS** - have they got good social skills to be able to mix?
- **NO SAFE SPACE** - busy? Crowded? Noisy? Not allowed inside?
- **EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD** - Lots going on, not always in their control. Often get hurt, hot
- **EXHAUSTING** - physically and emotionally draining

WHAT OPERATIONAL BARRIERS ARE THERE TO SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL TIMES IN YOUR SETTING?

LENGTH OF PLAYTIME - How long is your lunchtime? An hour is a long time

ADULT SUPPORT AVAILABLE - What's the set up for your social times?

STAFF TRAINING - Do Lunchtime staff get regular de-escalation training/emotional regulation training?

ACTIVITIES ON OFFER - Do you have zones and activities? Do your lunchtime staff get involved and actively participate?

INSIDE / OUTSIDE? Do children have the opportunity to access inside and outside in your setting? Why might this be important? Quiet activities available for some children who prefer this?

BEHAVIOUR /RELATIONAL POLICY - Does your school focus on negative consequences or positive relational approaches such as restorative practices?

ORGANISING THE SPACE

Audit what goes on at lunch and then make a plan.

What space is available? How many staff do you have?

Pupil voice: what games do the children want?

Have you planned a mixture of activities so they don't get bored?

How often do these activities change?



ROUTINE, ROUTINE, ROUTINE...



CoMLP Outreach

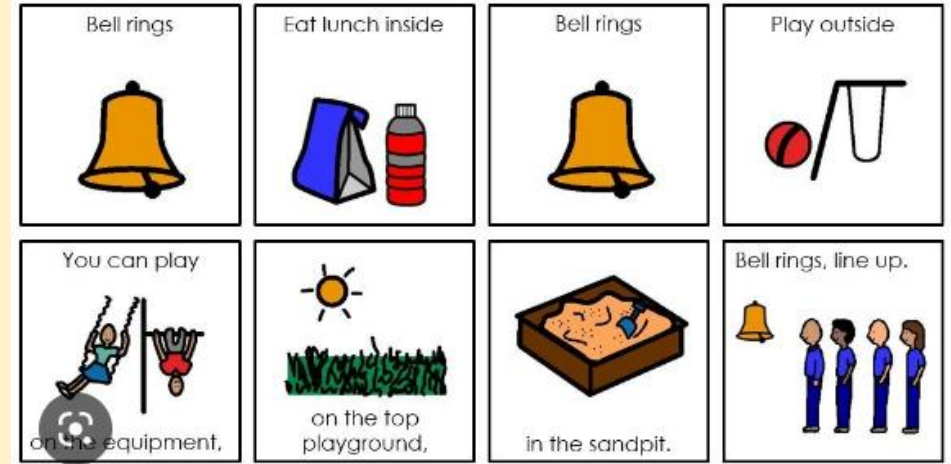
Build in structure!
Children are more settled when they know what to expect.

Predictable ROUTINES help to prevent conflicts. By building routines, we can put support in place for individual needs.

Predictability helps children to feel safe
When children feel safe, there are less anxieties and triggers or if they do occur, they can self regulate more effectively.

Could time be chunked? 15minutes for eating, 15minutes team games?
15minutes quiet, structured games.

LUNCH TIME



SAFE SPACES



CoMLP Outreach

Are there spaces inside and outside accessible?

Do you use emotional scaling in your school?
Introduce some Zones of Regulation benches /
regulation stations

For children with SEMH who struggle with social
times, work with them and do some pupil voice as to
where they feel safe / what they need to be able to
regulate and feel safe.

Identify key people



EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND SCALING



CoMLP Outreach

Children with SEMH often struggle to understand and explain their feelings.

If you use emotional scaling, is this visually available in social situations?

Lanyards? Displays? Adult support?



Restorative Justice



CoMLP Outreach

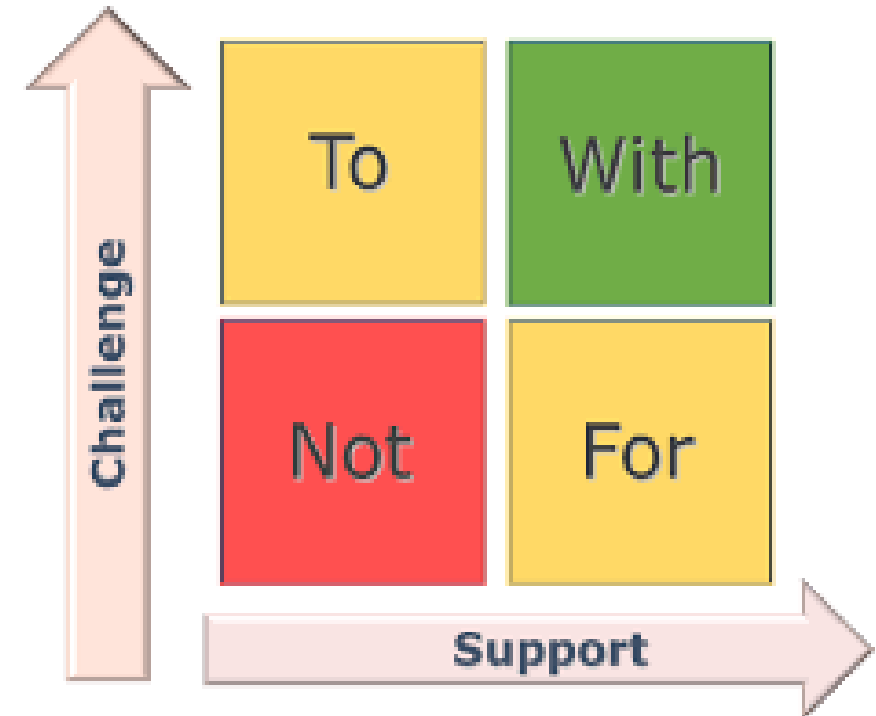
Restorative approaches / Restorative justice is a set of principles and practice that encourages children to take responsibility for their behaviour by thinking through the causes and consequences and moving forward with a positive solution.

In a rules-based system, teachers often lead this and tell the children what to do so the child causing the harm does not learn about their responsibility or how it affected the other person

When used as a whole school relational practice in schools, skills can be taught and developed in children to maintain and repair relationships, focusing on empathy and self-learning.

Restorative practices are centred around key questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking / feeling at the time?
- What have you thought about it since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?



STRATEGIES - dealing with incidents



CoMLP Outreach

1) **STAY CALM**

2) **GET RID OF THE AUDIENCE**

"Thank you for your help. Go and play so I can help your friends."

3) **LISTEN TO EACH CHILD'S SIDE**

1 minute each - no interruptions

Don't judge or say you believe / don't believe it

4) **SUMMARISE** both sides briefly

5) **NEXT STEPS** - how will you will move it forward?

Let the children decide what happens

Don't make them apologise as they might not be ready

If the children can't find a way, then you might have to suggest something.

6) **AGREE THAT THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN SORTED** - give praise

Report it to the CT so everyone knows what has happened.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Ensure all staff know and follow the school behaviour policy so there is consistency.

Be aware of what is going on - be observant and proactive!

Encourage positive praise. Catch them being good and give praise. Positive will ALWAYS be more effective than threat / punishment. If you need to speak to them, do it privately and at an appropriate time even if that means coming back to the behaviour later on.

Instead of telling children what not to do, tell them what you want them to do. POSITIVE

Explicitly teach them the right way.

Be consistent in your approach.

Don't ask "Why".

Instead of Why did you do that? Ask What happened? Children don't always know - it may be due to another need they have and asking Why makes them feel shame.

Take-Aways



CoMLP Outreach



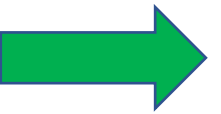
Play and social times are important for many reasons - children have a right to play



Do an audit of social times and make a plan to guide staff and children - what approaches and activities do you want to include?



Routine and structure will help to prevent anxiety in children and staff



Think how you support children in class and if these approaches are accessible and supported during social times



Ensure staff are there to model/interact with YP at social times



Language - be aware of what choices children are given - they may not always respond how you want them to so use simple scripts

CoMLP Outreach