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BOOK REVIEWS

Emotional Well-being for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: A Guide for Practitioners

By Gail Bailey

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Dr. Gail Bailey, the author of this book, is a child psychologist based in West Wales. She completed her doctorate in educational psychology on the emotional well-being of children and young people with visual impairments. She herself has severe sight impairment. The book was inspired by her research and by her work as an educational psychologist, working with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who were reported by teachers, social workers or parents as being in need of emotional support. The book promotes a holistic approach to emotional well-being. While it identifies factors that are important at the individual level, it also includes measures that may be put into practice at family, peer-group and whole-school level.

The book is divided into three parts. *Part 1, A Model for Classroom Practitioners* examines how those with SEND may be at greater risk of experiencing barriers to emotional well-being than their non-disabled peers. It utilises positive psychology approaches to address this in a constructive and proactive way and includes a self-assessment tool for practitioners to help them appraise their current practice in promoting emotional well-being. *Part 2* focuses on assessment to appraise how the child experiences autonomy, independence, sense of competence and social inclusion in school, family and community life. It includes resources to appraise experience of autonomy and independence, to highlight strengths and to evaluate social connectedness. *Part 3* examines strategies that may be used regarding the areas highlighted during assessment. It includes case studies and offers points for reflection. A photo-copiable guide for parents is included to illustrate the model. A flowchart is provided to assist in using the practical resources in the book.



This book is easy-to-read, informative and very practical. In highlighting areas that are outside the child's control, it outlines strategies that can be utilised to minimise risk of longer-term mental health problems and social exclusion. It is thorough and each area assessed is supplemented further by case studies, advice and strategies. For example, in assessing a child's current experience of autonomy, a questionnaire is included to be completed by the child, and the reasoning behind each question is outlined. An observation sheet can record specific issues arising in the assessment. Relevant case studies are included and strategies outlined for consideration. In assessing competence, it focuses on personal strengths. A worksheet is outlined to be completed with the child, a card game is included that is based on the internationally recognized strengths assessment tool used in *Children's Strengths Survey* (Seligman, 2003), an action plan is highlighted to help the child in recognizing and developing his/her strengths and a case study is included for consideration.

The practical nature of this book makes it very user-friendly. Dr. Bailey has utilised her research findings to develop a model that is comprehensive and holistic. It supports self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000) which highlights the importance of autonomy, competence and relatedness in enabling positive emotional well-being and motivation. It illustrates how these qualities can be impacted upon by a child's disability and offers realistic suggestions to promote emotional well-being. However, the strategies could be useful for any child in need of emotional support.

Offering emotional support to a pupil can be challenging and can lead to uncertainty in ascertaining the correct level and form of assistance. While other resources are available, for example the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Guidelines for Teachers on Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties*, this practical guide, inclusive of worksheets, case studies, points for practice and points for reflection, could complement and supplement these and offer viable guidance to teachers, special needs assistants, parents and others involved with the child or youth to promote his/her emotional well-being.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES: A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS by Gail Bailey, is published by Sage Publications, London, 2012 and costs STG£22.99.

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