

# MANAGING MY EMOTIONS



**We're living through uncertain times. In the middle of all this, we know children need some structure, some 'normalness' – and that's not easy at the moment.**

We've been working with children in difficult circumstances for 70 years. Today, many children across the UK are feeling anxious and lonely. So, we're sharing some simple activities from our teams in refugee camps with UK families, to help your children stay hopeful and healthy during this time.

## The Energy Within



**Aim:** For children to be aware of the feelings of being energised and being relaxed, and to learn to calm themselves when they need to.

**Ages:** Young to adult

**Materials:** None



1. Stand with your children, spaced apart.
2. Ask your children to shake their bodies – starting with their hands, then their arms, legs, torso, head. Shake all parts of the body. (You can join in too!)
3. Next, start walking on the spot, running on the spot, and then running as fast as you can on the spot for at least one minute, to get everyone's heart rate up.
4. Next, tell everyone to stand very still.
5. Ask your children what's happening in their bodies.  
**Can they feel their heart beating? Do they notice tingles in their belly, legs or arms? Is there heat in their body?** Tell them **'This is your energy. Your energy within.'** This feeling might seem similar to when they're very excited. Sometimes when we're excited, we might find it hard to calm down. In these situations, it can help to remember that our energy can also be still and calm.

6. Now (either standing or lying down) ask everyone to close their eyes and think of the floor. The floor is steady. It doesn't move and it keeps us safe. Can your children think of someone who helps them feel safe and steady? Ask them to use their energy within to feel that love and support now.
7. Next, ask the children to open their eyes slowly, gently moving their fingers, their shoulders, their heads from side to side and returning to 'normal'.

Feeling the difference between how being energised and being relaxed feels, helps children (and adults) to understand that they can calm themselves when they need to.

This activity also allows children to know that no matter what changes around them, the ground – and their loved ones – will always keep them steady.

Some children may have difficulty quieting down their energy. You can ask them to try to be very quiet and listen inside. Or ask them to either bend over and touch the ground with their hands, then let their whole body hang down and relax, or to crouch down with their arms around their knees and their heads down like a turtle until they feel more relaxed.



# Tree in the Wind

**Aim:** Help your children to relax, to feel grounded and secure, and to use their imagination.

**Ages:** 6+

**Materials:** None



Stand with your children – make sure everyone can stretch out their arms without bumping someone else!

Read out the following directions (and follow them yourself, to enjoy a moment of calm too):

1. Please stand nice and straight with your feet placed apart (about as far apart as the width of your shoulders) and bend your knees a little bit. Relax your arms at your sides, letting them hang down.
2. Close your eyes, or, you can just keep your eyes lowered and look softly toward the floor.
3. Be sure to stay standing on the same spot, and to feel your feet planted onto the ground, just like the roots of a tree. Imagine you have roots growing down into the ground, standing firm.
4. Now find the centre of your body (centre of gravity) – you might feel this just below your belly button. Breathe nice slow, deep breaths and imagine your breath going down to your centre.
5. Feel your feet (roots) connecting you to the earth.
6. Breathe into your belly, and as you breathe out, imagine your roots digging deeper and deeper into the soil. Let your roots tunnel down through soil and stones and become strong. Your roots keep you balanced and steady. Your legs are like the trunk of a tree supported by your roots.
7. As you breathe in, imagine energy coming up through your roots and trunk and up into your arms. Slowly lift up your arms like branches and then, as

you breathe out, send the energy into your arms and fingertips to grow branches and leaves. Breathe in the energy from your roots, and breathe out to send the energy to feed your branches and leaves. Let the branches grow and spread – some may be thick and strong, others more delicate. Wiggle your fingers and feel your leaves moving in the wind.

8. Let the leaves and branches reach up to the sun. Imagine the sun's energy coming in from above, and then the energy coming up from the soil below. Feel nourished and refreshed. Let the energy flow.
9. On your firm roots deep in the ground, begin to sway like a tree in the wind. Gently wave your arms from side to side, and forwards and backwards, while you keep taking deep breaths.
10. Now, imagine the wind has stopped. Be still and come back to your centre – your standing tree.
11. Slowly draw your roots and your branches back into your body – bring your arms slowly back in toward your sides. Stand still for a few moments, breathing and feeling calm.
12. Finally, open your eyes and gently 'shake loose'. Begin to lift up each foot, bounce a few times gently on your feet and shake your hands and arms.

Your tree is always there. Whenever you want to feel rooted and strong and calm, you can just plant your feet and grow your roots and branches again!

## Variation

This exercise can also be done sitting down. Imagine the roots coming from the base of the body and sitting bones connected to the earth.