

Extraordinary publication

Supporting our children and young people to respond to the news

The situation in Ukraine is awful. We may be some distance away from the actual events, but some of our children and young people will still be either directly or indirectly affected by it. Social media feeds, news apps, websites, humanitarian aid adverts and others can all fuel the upset and worry that can be affecting our community. For some children, young people and adults, simply watching and reading about the war can have an impact on their own emotions and behaviours. There have been many resources shared over the past few days which can help schools and parents to respond to children's emotional presentation and their wellbeing. Some of these have been pulled together here to support you as you work with the children and young people who are affected.

In some of our schools and academies, there will be children, young people and adults who are directly affected by the war – they may have Ukrainian or Russian family members; they may have family overseas who are working in or near to one of the nations affected by the war. They may be fearful of the news that suggests that energy prices will increase *even* more, knowing already that their parents and carers are choosing between heating and eating. Our school and academy staff do a fabulous job of supporting all of our community on a daily basis – we know that the response to needs that emerge as we return from this half-term break will be no different.

Prayer

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war and peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Prayer courtesy of Archbishop Justin Welby and Archbishop Stephen Cottrell

Newsround

CBBC Newsround has pulled together a fabulous article which explores what the words mean – it explores vocabulary such as *annexation, displaced, invasion, Kremlin, Nato, Oligarchs, refugee, sanctions, separatists, Slava Ukraine, sovereignty, United Nations, USSR*. This will help children and young people with understanding the language that they hear.

Picture News

Picture News has compiled a freely available assembly for colleagues to use with children and young people. The slides are included at the end of this extraordinary newsletter.

Save the Children

Save the Children has created a guide about 'how to talk with children about the conflict in Ukraine' – hosted on their website: [How to Talk About War and Conflict with Kids, According to a Child Counselor | Save the Children](#)

Clinical Psychologist advice

Doing the rounds on SENCo social media groups over the weekend have been a series of slides shared by Clinical Psychologist, Dr Martha Deiros Collado, based in London. The original posts can be found on her Instagram - @dr.martha.psychologist – she also reminds that one of the most powerful things that we can do is advise parents and our children and young people to ensure that they don't have the news on constantly – this will, in itself, fuel fear.

The images that Dr Martha has created are at the end of this edition of the newsletter.

Andrew Hall – weekly safeguarding briefings

If, as a DSL or DDSL, you are not subscribed to Andrew Hall's weekly update to colleagues, then I would recommend subscribing to it – he does provide some helpful updates and round ups. His *Safeguarding Briefing* from 28th February 2022 has lots of recommendations of websites to support teachers and others to help children and young people understand – and also parents and families. In the event that you do not receive these updates, this week's suggestions are summarised below:

Supporting your child if they see upsetting content online about what is happening in Ukraine (Childnet)

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/supporting-your-child-with-upsetting-content/>

We should not hide from children what is happening in Ukraine (Schools Week/Children's Commissioner)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/we-should-not-hide-from-children-what-is-happening-in-ukraine/>

How to talk to children about what's happening in Ukraine and World War Three anxiety (Metro)

<https://metro.co.uk/2022/02/24/how-to-talk-to-children-about-whats-happening-in-ukraine-16163133/>

Help for teachers and families to talk to pupils about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how to help them avoid misinformation (Department for Education)

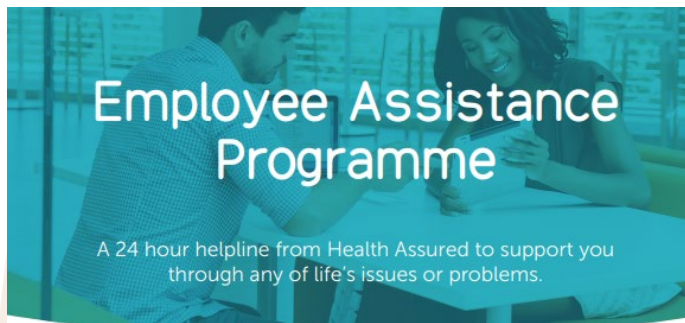
<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/25/help-for-teachers-and-families-to-talk-to-pupils-about-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-and-how-to-help-them-avoid-misinformation/>

Support for children and young people with special educational needs

There are some excellent resources available to support children with additional needs in relation to worry and anxiety – these would be great resources to use in the coming days, weeks and months; however, there have been some helpful resources pulled together over the weekend to support adults working with vulnerable children and young people – again, these resources are included at the end of this edition of the newsletter.

Support for adults

The news that surrounds us currently could be as anxiety-inducing for adults as it could be for the children and young people whom we serve. Directly supporting children and young people who display these vulnerabilities brings with it added pressure, but, at times like this, we need to remind ourselves that the news could affect any of our colleagues as well. Please share the Employee Assistance Programme information as appropriate – it may be wise to share it with everyone given the current climate.



Free 24 Hour Confidential Helpline:

0800 028 0199

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|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Stress & anxiety | Counselling | Family issues |
| Bereavement | Financial wellbeing | Childcare support |
| Relationship advice | Legal information | Medical information |
| Tenancy & housing concerns | Alcohol & drug issues | Consumer issues |

Download 'My Healthy Advantage' now

Employer code:



To find out more visit:
healthassured.eap.com

health assured

Username: Password:

What's happening in the news?



Let's have a look at the poster...

Helping Ukraine Special



**What are other countries
doing to help Ukraine?**

Picture
News



Let's look at the story

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, thousands of people have left their homes to reach areas where they think they will be safe. The United Nations have estimated that at least 100,000 people have already left their homes.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that the UK needed to do everything it could to help Ukraine's economy and support its government.

Thousands of people have already crossed into neighbouring countries including Romania, Moldova and Poland.



Learn more about this story [here](#).
Watch the useful video [here](#).



Resource

Look at the resource below, which shares some information about the story.

What's happening in Ukraine?

Ukraine and Russia have a lot of unsettled history. The two countries used to be part of the Soviet Union, from 1922-1991. Some Ukrainians want their country to have closer ties to the western countries, but others want it to have closer ties to Russia. Over the past few days, Russia have launched a wave of attacks on Ukraine with Russian forces launched a major military assault on Ukraine on Thursday morning.

How are Ukraine's neighbouring countries helping?

Countries who share a border with Ukraine have been preparing for the arrival of refugees. Maia Sandu, Moldova's president said she was

prepared to help Ukrainian refugees. Slovakia, Hungary and Poland have also said they are

ready to welcome refugees and are sending extra troops to manage people arriving at crossings set up on their borders with Ukraine.



Pictured above: Ukraine in orange and Russia in Green

How are the UK and wider world helping Ukraine?

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced sanctions to have a negative impact on the Russian economy and he's said that the UK was one of the first countries in Europe to send defensive weapons to help Ukraine.

There are many charities that are offering support including **UNICEF**, who are working across eastern Ukraine to deliver life-saving programmes for children.

Sunflower of Peace is another charity who are helping paramedics and doctors, and have been fundraising for supplies, which include medical backpacks.



Main question

What are other countries doing to help Ukraine?



Listen



Think



Share

- > Look at the poster image. Pictured is activist Greta Thunberg who is campaigning for peace in Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine have been in the news a lot recently, what do we already know about what's happening there?
- > Read through the news story. Does anyone know where Ukraine and Russia are located? Can you find them on a map or globe?
- > Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba said, "Putin has just launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine." He stressed that Ukraine will defend itself and that "the world can and must stop Putin". Can you imagine what it might be like for people living there? How do you think they might be feeling?
- > Read the information found on the resource and watch the useful video, which explains the current situation in Ukraine and considers how countries are helping. Can you think of any other ways that people can help?
- > UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he was "appalled by the horrific events in Ukraine". He said the UK will respond decisively to Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine and added that he had spoken to Ukraine's president to discuss how to respond and promises decisive action by the UK and its allies.
- > Many other countries have also spoken in defence of Ukraine, US President Joe Biden said, "America stands up to bullies, we stand up for freedom. This is who we are." In a televised address to the nation, French President Emmanuel Macron said, "France will stand by Ukraine's side."

Useful Weblinks

- > News story:
www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/60508750
- > Useful video:
www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/60495669

Share your thoughts and read the opinions of others

www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss



Should we protect kids from the news?

YES, as much as you can and is realistic. Keep a tight boundary on the conversations they may overhear at home and words that may be confusing or distressing to them.

Between the ages of 0-8yr children will struggle making sense of concepts such as death and War. Their brains are still developing abstract thinking and they blur reality with fantasy.

From 8yr onwards children have an understanding that War can lead to people dying. They may learn about War in history at school.

@dr.martha.psychologist

What if they hear something?

Lean in and open up the conversation

When children ask a question it means they have already considered an answer.

Having this conversation is less about giving answers to your child and more about getting curious about:

- What they have heard/they know
- What they understand
- How they feel
- What their fears/worries are
- How you will support them and keep them safe

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A brief guide on talking about big topics:

- Stay honest (ALWAYS!)
- Keep it simple (age appropriate!)
- Normalise all feelings (your child's and your own)
- Be led by their questions and give them opportunities to ask
- Reassure your child of their safety with you

Remember this:

You do not need to have all the answers

Listening and offering a safe space for your child to make sense of their experience is the most important

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How do I answer things I don't know/understand?

"Will there be a world war?" is a question some kids have asked their parents today (I know - I have heard it!)

Do we know the answer? **No.**
Can we respond in a way that feels safe to our children? **YES!**

"This is a big question. I wonder whether you are feeling a little bit scared? If you are - that's normal. I feel scared too. I don't know the answer but I know we are safe right now. What would help you feel safe tomorrow when this question pops up in your head again? What can I do?"

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How do I explain what 'war' is?

Children 8yr-12 upwards may have an idea of what war is. They are likely to have heard the words 'invasion', 'army', 'soldiers' and 'war' in history class.

Go with their starting point.

- What do they know?
- Where have they heard about it?
- How does it make them feel?

Teenagers will have an understanding of what war means and have information at their fingertips. They may benefit from protected time with you to talk through the news. Be curious about what they have heard and where (i.e. social media? Youtube? Friends/teachers?) and share reliable, accurate information in line with their concerns/worries. Keeping open channels of communication is the most important here.

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Look after you

What is happening in the world is affecting all of us.

An attack on any country is an attack on humanity.

Make sure you do whatever you and your body needs to feel safe and contained.

Talk to safe others, move, rest, and notice how much news and information you are consuming.

@dr.martha.psychologist

Take action

You may wish to take action. If your child is old enough and you feel it is appropriate, you could invite them to join in this OR share with them what steps you have taken.

(E.g. They could sign their name to the letter for your MP and/or choose what charity to contribute donations to)

Taking positive steps brings hope to children and offers them a good model of how to problem-solve in difficult situations and gain a sense of agency.

Some ideas of how to take action are on the next slide

@dr.martha.psychologist

How you can help

Voices of Children

www.voices.org.ua/en/

Charitable organisation offering psychological therapy and support to overcome the effects of war

Sunflower of Peace

Working on the ground that helps paramedics and doctors access supplies and medical first aid

United Help Ukraine

www.unitedhelpukraine.org

The British Redcross Emergency Appeal

www.redcross.org.uk

Writing to your MP

www.parliament.uk for info

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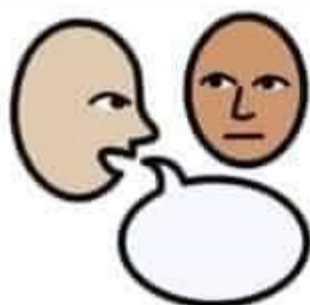
if worried about Russia and Ukraine part 1



lots of people are
worried about Russia
and Ukraine



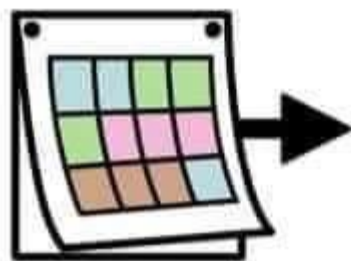
You might be worried
too, this is ok and is
very normal



talk to a friend or
family member about
how you are feeling

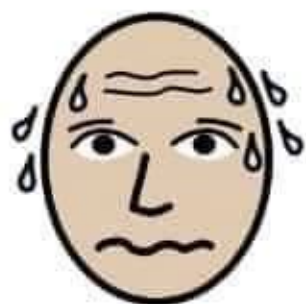


try to focus on what is
happening right now



try not to worry about
the past or the future

if worried about Russia and Ukraine part 2



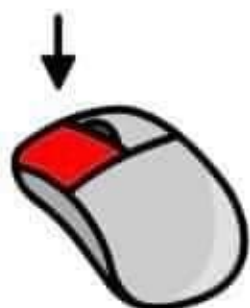
try to notice anything that makes you feel more worried



this could be social media or the news for example.



The news can sometimes make things sound worse than it actually is



this is because most people will be more likely to click and read the news with a scary title rather than a boring fact



which is what makes them more money

if worried about Russia and Ukraine part 3



most social media posts want you to like, comment and share



so like the news will also make things sound worse then it is



also anyone can post anything they want on social media so some things may not always be true

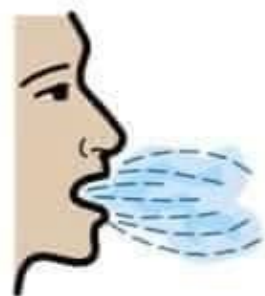


its sometimes good to keep up to date with the news



but if its worrying you, you can turn it off for as long as you need to

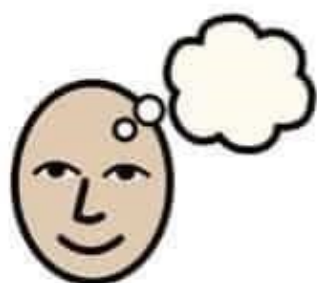
if worried about Russia and Ukraine part 4



if you are really worried try taking a few deep breaths



or focus on your 5 senses, like what can you see? hear? smell? taste? or touch?



try doing something else to help you think about more happy things instead



such as listening to podcast, doing a hobby, listen to music or do some yoga

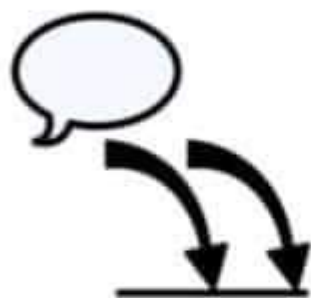


if you have bad thoughts
Try saying some affirmations to yourself

if worried about Russia and Ukraine part 5



affirmations are sentences that you say to yourself to help you feel better. It could be "I am brave" or "i am happy" etc



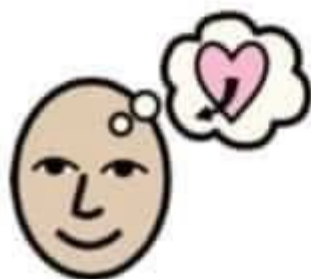
after saying an affirmation over and over again you should believe what you are saying and feel better



if you are very worried you could also also speak to your GP or the Samaritans



If you want to call samaritans their phone number is 116 123



hope this helps
you feel better