Welcome to this presentation on supporting schools with ‘the new normal’ and introducing the recovery curriculum; my name is Lisa Mills and I work for the Inclusive Education Services Learning Support Team.

We have had an unprecedented time of change, loss and unpredictability which has impacted on our lives like nothing else since the Second World War. A time of economic instability and educational uncertainty. We are still travelling along this very uncertain road towards a new normal but have no real idea of what may look like in a few months’ time. What we do know however is that when we return to school in September, whilst it will look materially very similar to what we left in March, the same buildings, hopefully the same staff, predominantly the same children, what WILL be VERY different is the way we have to approach education and the recovery from this huge gap of teaching time. That’s not to say we plough straight back in to where we left off – that would be exceptionally naïve…..but we now have an opportunity to start a new path to a successful recovery from such as traumatic time that we are all living through.

What is the Recovery Curriculum?

- Founded By Prof Barry Carpenter (Head teacher / Fellow of University of Oxford and The Chartered College of Teaching / Professor of Mental Health/ Advisor/SEND specialist and ASD Specialist)
- A chance for schools to develop their own recovery curriculum that embraces children as learners in a changed world with a focus on rebuilding education and learning, based on the needs of each individual time.
- Schools should be looking towards Compassionate Leadership, focusing on their core aims and values as the starting point to rebuild and reconstruct a curriculum that can support the mental health and wellbeing of the children in their care.
- Most children left school in March of this year and will return in September – It is naive of us all to thin that they can simply pick up form where they left off. The experience for every child during lockdown has been different. Some will have lost loved ones, family, relatives, friends…..others will have experienced emotional and physical trauma, neglect …..for others, lockdown may have been a positive experience in many ways, but everyone’s experience will have been different and we need to encourage children to share their experience in some way to be able to address their fears, concerns and anxieties about an uncertain future and provide them with some hope moving forward. Many will have felt a sense of abandonment by their schools…..their teachers…..that lack of routine and regular contact with trusted adult they see daily, who help and support them ….a go to person to share their worries with. For some children, that support network will have been non-existent for 6 months so we have to be able to help them access these feelings and support their recovery. There is no doubt that some of our children will have experienced very traumatic events during this time and be left with many emotional scars that need addressing. Until these issues are addressed they can’t possibly be ready to learn again….a happy child is a learning child after all.
- Let’s listen to what the children tell us and devise our recovery around their individual needs.
- At [www.recoverycurriculum.org](http://www.recoverycurriculum.org) you can find podcasts and resources to help support writing a recovery curriculum for schools.
The 5 Loses children have experienced during the Pandemic... Routine Structure Friendship Opportunity Freedom

Routine and Structure...... many children rely on that routine of school, the routine of organising their bag, their books, catching a bus to school, moving from lesson to lesson with the secure knowledge that they are protected, supported and safe......for some, that has been eradicated by this pandemic and so the children’s fears and anxieties about what a ‘new normal is ’ and what the ‘new routines’ will be. For those transitioning in September this is compounded. Schools have been exceptionally creative with transition support but most children won’t have any real concept of what to expect come September in a new school or a new year group with new teachers and new classrooms.

Friendship..........Many children rely on school for that close contact with their peers, their friends. Some children may not have even seen or spoken to those friends they saw Daily at the beginning of the year. They will have anxieties about these friendships.....All sorts of questions that will need addressing.

Opportunity.......the loss of opportunity is devastating for some. Those opportunities to learn, to socialise, to gains skills and knowledge, to take exams, to go to the prom, to sit tests to show how hard they have worked all year, for a whole key stage......some children will feel relieved by this I am sure, but others will feel angered, cheated even. It’s crucial these feelings are addressed otherwise they become resentment.

Freedom.......and finally freedom. We have all had some of our freedoms removed over the past 6 months. Freedoms that we often take for granted, without warning in some cases......sudden changes that have affected us......a loss of control. That uncertainty can eat away at us and is something that destroys our ability to recover effectively. It’s something we therefore must discuss with our children.

So how can we do this ... By Creating a supportive curriculum to support these loses. A curriculum focusing on Bereavement, Attachment, Anxiety and Trauma.......understanding all the emotions that have been experienced since last March ......How will these feelings manifest themselves in September? How will the children behave on Day one in your class ......And how will those behaviours develop as they experience the ‘new routines and new normal’ ......Children will have expectations that may not be realities in practice and that will undoubtedly affect behaviours. Some children will act out; cries for help.....others will withdraw, others will profess to be ‘fine’ when inwardly they are struggling.....How can we support this?

The Dynamics of Teaching and School have changed. We will have children with INSECURE ATTACHMENTS now. Hypervigilance, Loss of Communication skills, increased anxiety and fear. This has to be addressed and supported through a recovery curriculum.

The EMBARK federation have devised a Pathway through the Pandemic
They look at key aspects in providing a recovery process ...
Staying connected ....serving our communities ...providing ongoing support ...planning for return......reconnecting......introducing a recovery curriculum......a new educational landscape offering Hope/ new beginnings/ new ideas / new approaches...then sustaining that support and finally developing professionally towards a new curriculum that puts the children’s emotional and wellbeing needs at the heart of the curriculum . After all – isn’t that what we all want as teachers...? Yes, academic qualifications, knowledge and aptitude are essential parts of any curriculum .....But our main goal as teachers is to develop a child to be able to cope in the world, to be a well-rounded compassionate individual who can contribute to community and society. That, in this current climate, has to take precedence!

6 So planning for September ......The end of term is looming and as teachers we will be already planning for September, but this year’s planning will be like no other.....there are still so many uncertainties. But there are some things we can address

▶ It will be an experimental time with the requirement for a ‘needs led curriculum’.....we have to focus on the experiences that the children have had and set the work appropriately around the need arising from these experiences

▶ There will be Raised Anxiety ( Cortisol levels in the brain during this time have hugely increased and this creates and imprint on the brain thus creating FEAR/ it’s our fight or flight reaction ....this will lead to behavioural changes we have to address) An anxious child is not a learning child so we have to reduce their anxiety with activities and sessions promoting mental wellbeing

▶ We need to use ‘Recovery Conversations’ with the children to inform our practice and guide the curriculum towards supporting the emotional needs of each child

▶ The use of A ‘Pandemic Register’ which would be just like a SEND register that has an overview of each child ready for all staff to use , to help inform just what experiences the children have had, otherwise we are simply guessing!........ What have they actually experienced during lockdown? (Loss/emotional trauma/ physical trauma/ neglect)?? What questions do they have? Will I be able to get back my lost learning? Is this time away for school going to affect my GCSE results, my chances at University? Does this mean I will miss out on things later in life? Do my friends want to be my friends anymore because someone in my family has been poorly?

▶ Parental and Pupil voice – using the voices of everyone to fully understand what families have been through and therefore what support they need moving forward

▶ We have an opportunity now to truly embed a dynamic, supportive, positive emotional wellbeing curriculum into schools, something to celebrate, something to empower our young people and something that can support them into adulthood.

▶ Amanda Spielman announced there would be no Ofsted full inspections in the first term of the 2020/2021 academic years......no formal judgments will be made, only potential short visits in first term to see how schools are coping with Recovery and to share best practice for this......so now is the time to be able to reinvent the first term’s curriculum and embed this moving forward

▶ We are able to Use the first term for re-establishing, relearning routines and recovery.....to develop a sense of security, trust, empath and understanding for our school communities.
Within the recovery curriculum, whatever that may look like in your school, however you decide to approach your recovery, and it is YOUR choice – this isn’t something you can buy in, it’s not a support pack that will arrive in the post – it’s something you have to develop to meet the individual needs of your school at this time...but however you choose to approach your recovery, there are 5 main things to focus on - the Levers, the pivots of change.

- **Lever 1: Relationships** – we can’t expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

- **Lever 2: Community** – we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

- **Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum** – all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.

- **Lever 4: Metacognition** – in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

- **Lever 5: Space** – time to just **BE**, to rediscover self, and to find their voice again. It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers in the future, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations as teachers.

So what might recovery look like – here you will find many links/suggestions/interventions/books/websites and ideas to help support you in developing your own Recovery Curriculum. The focus on building emotional resilience in our learners is paramount. Children need to learn ‘how to learn again’, to trust again, to rebuild relationships, to re-engage, to overcome and just to cope! No one can truly comprehend to tide of emotions our children will be feeling......some will be overwhelmed and need that support to start to function effectively again in a school and community environment.

We are not super human - we shouldn’t be spending our summer break devising new schemes of work, creating a plethora of handouts, laminating clean easy documents, ......There are so many interventions to be considered and a wealth of resources **already out there** we can all access. There’s no reason to ‘reinvent the wheel’......us the resources and ideas we have already looked at as a starting point......your recovery curriculum will be fluid and grow and morph as the needs become evident......Here are a few ideas however to help and promote wellbeing and support the development of emotional resilience within your school.
Happiness Boxes (Shoe Boxes – with object placed inside that describe what makes children happy, that they can revisit and refer to)

Consider Shorter Lessons - chunked with SEMH work

Mindfulness activities to promote relaxation and reflection and reduce anxiety

Imitation Activities to support brain and develop new neural pathways

Creativity and Compassion activities

Re-centre with Nature and gardening groups, exploration events, treasures hunts

The THRIVE approach (SEMH lessons and daily Emotional Wellbeing activities)

Imitation and puppetry work to explore issues concerning the children

Promoting relationships and resilience in all lessons...we have to understand that the children will act, react, behave in ways that may be totally alien to previous behaviours..........there has to be a curriculum that can access their thoughts, feelings, worries and concerns and address these, supporting the recovery of what the children are experiencing

Recalibrating the Curriculum to ‘serve the child’ and the ‘needs profile of the children’

You may consider looking at the NHS’s 5 Ways to Wellbeing project

Here is a list of links that can provide you with all the resources you need. Web clips to begin developing ideas on how to move forward with Recovery......Wellbeing Journals to use with the children .......Blogs and Free Downloads to support the work you will be doing. Try linking with other schools and sharing ideas and plans.

Here we have further information and webinars to watch full of resources and support ideas

A final word from Barry Carpenter......Our children are vulnerable at this time, and their mental-health fragile...........academic learning may well feel totally inconsequential to them at this time........it’s our role now to help support their recovery towards a more stable life full of happiness and hope.

......... And we can’t do that unless we take care of ourselves .....so please, please do think about YOU........YOU are the single most important asses to any child in your school and unless YOU are happy, centred, emotionally resilient, strong, hopeful and WELL, you can’t possibly help and support the children in your care. Have a good summer. Take time for YOU .....Thank you

Lisa Mills  lisa.mills@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
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