

Stronger Together Newsletter



Dear Caregivers

This week the session has focused on how what we believe about ourselves impacts how we live our life, both our successes and self-esteem, as well as potentially limiting life's opportunities.

Workshop Three.

I Am What I Believe I AM. Understanding how limiting beliefs can hold you back.



Brain Box

The biggest thing that holds us back in life is our beliefs. We begin to form fixed beliefs about ourselves around the age of 6 or 7. We start to look across at our peers and judge ourselves, putting ourselves in boxes. I'm in the 'good at running' box or 'I'll never be able to draw' box. There can be positive boxes too, I am in the 'good at reading' box.

Our beliefs affect the way we talk to ourselves, and this self-talk affects the structure of our brain. Ask your child to explain what is happening in the photograph of the brain neurons firing up.



Try it, Teach it

This week is all about introducing how damaging our negative self-talk can be in forming beliefs that can have life-long lasting effects on our development and relationships.

"I am rubbish at football."

"I hate mornings and getting up."

"My brother/sister hates me."

Encourage your child to fill in the beliefs detective sheet. Try not to discuss their negative self-talk as being bad, as this is a natural part of the human mind. Simply remind your child to be aware that this negative self-talk is not helpful, and it will prevent them from being the best they can be.

These reframing exercises take time, and you never achieve a mind of full 'positivity,' you simply get quicker and better at re-framing. Re-framing gives you power and strength which slowly builds inner confidence.



You Do It Too

An incredibly powerful conversation is to explain how your own negative beliefs have held you back. This week I would like you to try to focus as much as possible on tapping into your child's mind, rather than the behaviour they are displaying. For example;

"You have been ignoring me, tell me what's going on inside your head right now."

"What were you thinking towards your sister to make you behave like that."

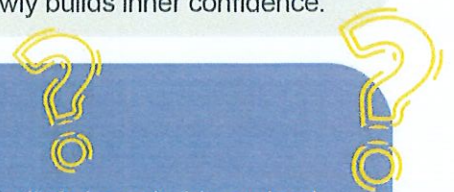
"What makes you think you are rubbish at Maths."

The calmer you are during these investigations the more likely you are to get an answer. If you don't get a reply, that's ok, simply point out that it will have been the child's thoughts that created the behaviour. Then give some space, maybe advise your child when they are ready to take some deep breaths and practise a reframing statement such as;

"I will practise and get better."

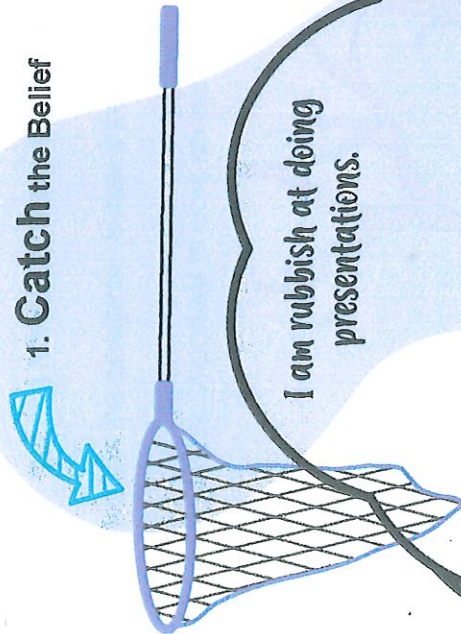
"I am motivated to do this."

"I am calm, and will walk away."



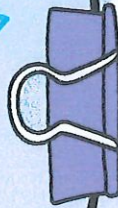
Detecting My Beliefs - Use The Three C's Method

1. Catch the Belief



2. Collect Evidence

What evidence do I have that makes me believe this is true?



My body shakes before I speak.
People will laugh at me.
I will forget what to say.

3. Challenge the Evidence

- Dig deeper – Why do these things happen to
- Is it just my perspective? Could there be another way of looking at it?
- Is it my inner voice of self-doubt taking over?

My body shakes

This is because this is challenging me.

People will laugh at me

I don't know that this will happen. If they do I will be calm. I will forget what I have to say

I will use strategies to keep me calm that helps my memory.

4. Reframing My Belief

What positive affirmations can you use? How can I change my inner self-talk to help change my beliefs?

I am brave, I am calm, I can get better at presenting the more I do it, the more comfortable it feels. Presenting is something I am working hard on.

Brain Box

Resources - Brain Cell Image

What do you think it is that is holding you back in certain areas? Is it that you haven't yet developed the skills to do something? Or maybe you think it's that you weren't born to be good at maths or being creative? Ask the children what they think. What is it that makes people not good at some things?

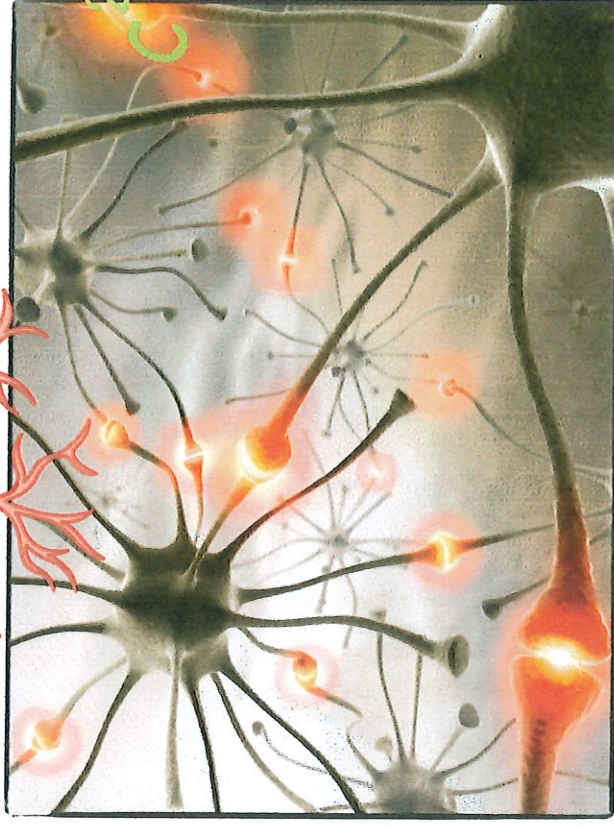
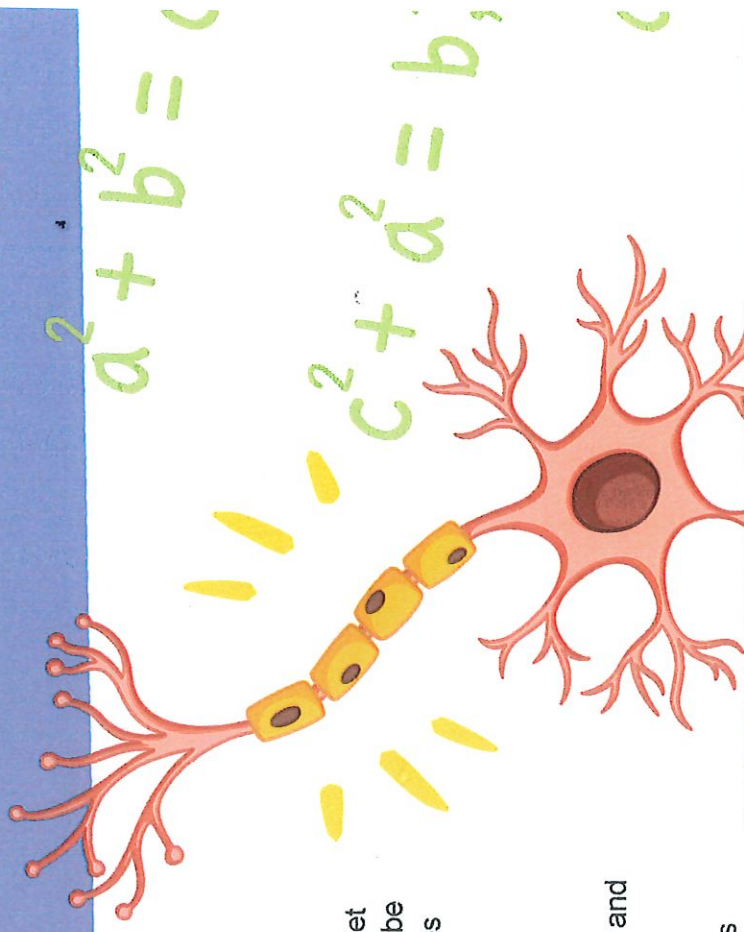
Explain that the biggest thing that holds us back in life is our beliefs. We begin to form fixed beliefs about ourselves around the age of 6 or 7. We begin to look across at our peers and judge ourselves and put ourselves in boxes. I'm in the 'good at running box' and the 'great at art' box, but not in the 'confidence at speaking out in class' box.

Our beliefs affect the way we talk to ourselves, and the way we talk to ourselves affects the structure of our brain.

Look at the image of the neurons firing up. Explain what is happening each time we have a thought about anything.

If our thoughts are positive, "Oh great, it's maths, I love maths, I'm going to do great today" these positive thoughts release chemicals like serotonin out from the centre of the brain cell. The chemicals travel down the dendrites (or arms of the brain cell) and they are looking to connect with another brain cell in order to connect to another and another as shown in the diagram.

There is a tiny gap called the synaptic gap between the dendrites. For the message to be transported across to the next brain cell the serotonin acts as a conductor attracting the other cells to the initial thought brain cell to allow the message to be passed on. When our brain is quite literally 'on fire' in this way we are able to think creatively and problem solve. It doesn't mean we always get things right but we can perform at our best because our brain is working FOR us.



Brain Box Continued...

If we think negatively, "I hate maths, it's boring, I'm rubbish," the brain releases a totally different chemical called cortisol. This chemical acts as an insulator, pushing the other brain cells away from the thinking brain cell. This is because you have given your brain negative information so the brain attempts to shut down in order to get ready to 'fight, flight or freeze' to enable it to deal with the potential danger. Your brain doesn't rationally think, "it's just a maths lesson," it actually believes there could be danger.

This is how powerful the way we talk to ourselves is. On top of this, our thoughts become habits. Like cleaning your teeth in a morning, the more you think negatively the more your brain will be drawn to thinking like that. This negative thinking becomes normal and comfortable for the brain, despite the fact that the thoughts are not comfortable happy thoughts.

We literally talk ourselves out of becoming good at things, and the more our negative minds make us shut down, the worse we get and the stronger the belief forms. "Told you, got them all wrong, rubbish at maths!" Of course you got them all wrong, you shut your brain down before you even started!

If we want to get better at something, we need to give it focused attention, we need to feel the struggle of growing and learning, but we cannot do this if we have no neurons firing.

During our mindset matters today we are looking at which beliefs we have about ourselves that we need to hold onto and which ones we need to start letting go of.

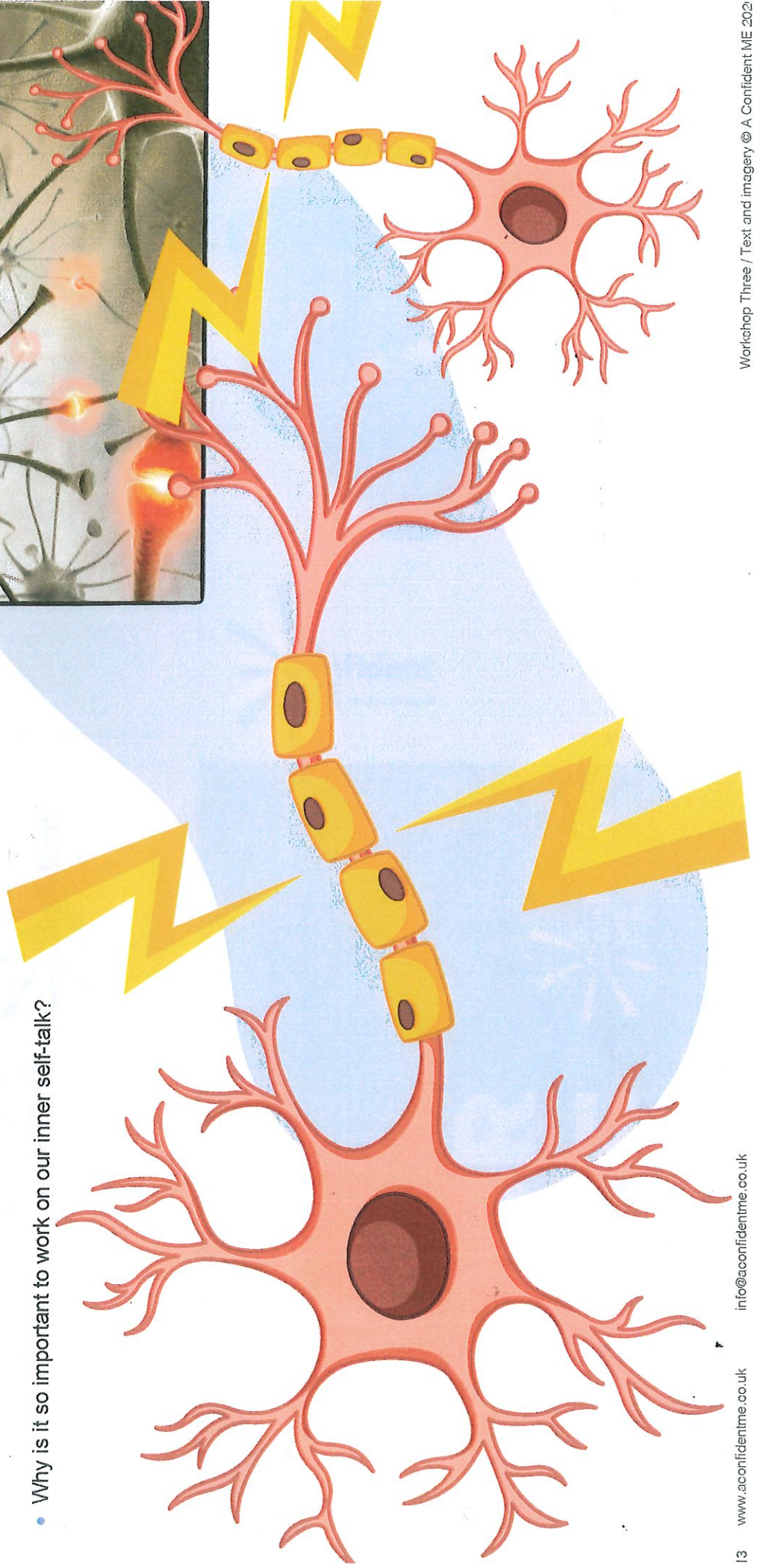
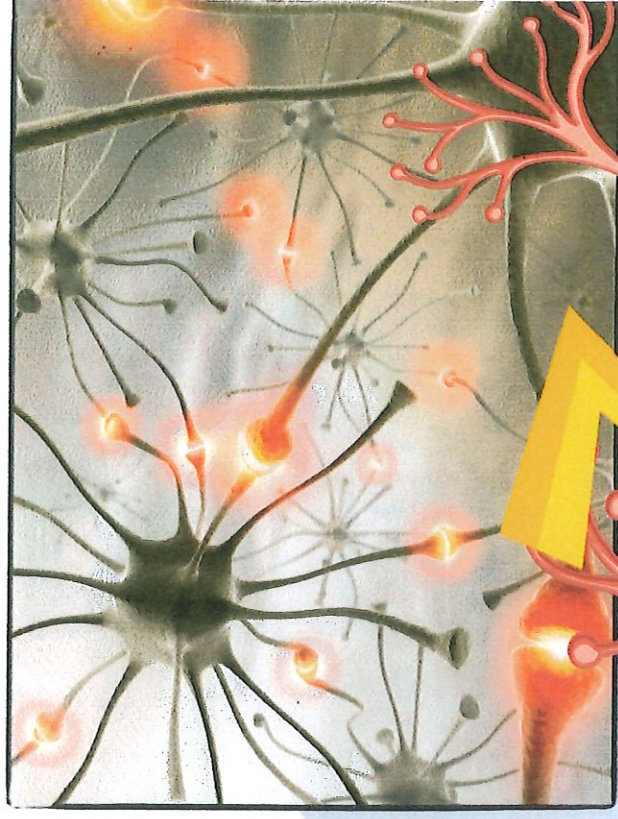
OF COURSE YOU GOT THEM ALL WRONG, YOU SHUT YOUR
BRAIN DOWN BEFORE YOU EVEN STARTED!

! ! !
"TOLD YOU, GOT THEM ALL
WRONG, RUBBISH AT MATHS!"



Goals For Growth (part Two)

- Can you point out the neurons and the dendrites?
- What is it that makes our brain 'on fire' like this?
- Where is the serotonin released from in order to make these connections?
- Why is it so important to work on our inner self-talk?



YOU CAN DO IT



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YOU ARE STRONGER & BRAVER THAN YOU THINK



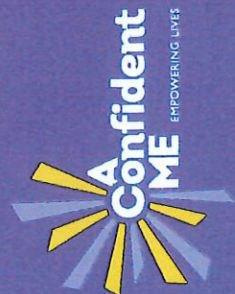
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