

The logo for PIXL, featuring the word 'PIXL' in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The letter 'i' is lowercase and has a white dot above it. The background is a vibrant orange with various circular patterns, including a large circle with a grid of dots in the top right and concentric circles in the bottom left.

IGNITING LEADERS
CHANGING LIVES

'Fear' Pearl resources

March 2024

This final Pearl episode looks at the impact fear can have on us.

In his book, 'My Life and Rugby', Eddie Jones outlines the four fatal fears.

Fear of making a mistake

Fear of losing

Fear of rejection

Fear of criticism

What are the other fears you have? What about your students?

When it comes to fear (whether we are adults or young people) we can try and unpick what it is that is causing us to fear. Fear exists in the shadows so talking about it and understanding what is causing it can be a powerful first step.

| Handling fear head on | My thoughts |
|--|-------------|
| In this situation, what is the underlying concern that is driving the fear? | |
| What is it that I want to happen? | |
| What is going to stop me? What are the barriers to me overcoming this thing? | |
| Which things are in my control? Out of those things, which ones will make the biggest difference to my fear? | |
| What is the story I am telling myself? Is this narrative factually correct or evidence based? | |
| What are the first steps I need to take to manage my emotions in this situation? | |

Fear can paralyse, marginalize and terrorize if we do not take small actions to help overcome some of the fear.

Here are some suggestions (adaptable across all age groups) that may help our young people fear less. Whether it is transition to a new school or pressure points and feeling stressed some of the following ideas can help.

Transition

- Offer day is the 1/3/24, send a welcome card in the summer term to the young people who will be joining your school to say how you are looking forward to seeing them.
- Start the 'soft transition' messages around marketing your community, in the early summer term so they have some non-threatening points to engage. For example, if you hold a summer fayre, invite all your feeder schools too.
- For staff who are fearful about their first few weeks, send them a welcome card in the summer term, ensure they understand what the first few weeks look like and timeframes of when they will find out detail.
- When new staff start, ensure that they can have an organisational chart with pictures and names on it, so it is easy to get to know people.
- A welcome letter from the tutor to parents of Primary children who are coming into Year 7.
- Making a distinction between induction and transition: transition is a process that can happen over a number of months to help ease people in, induction is the moment that young people start.
- Be aware how your school is coming across with parents – does it sound like a lot of rules as the first thing they say or have you taken the time to explain how schools work differently now than when they were at school, how you build your community, what the aim is for young people in this school and how you are going to enable that to happen. Do you talk about parents being relationship with you or are you setting them up as on a different side?
- Take staff through the Walking Talking Wildly Important Goal approach (using the videos and handouts on our website) and help them get to those small actionable steps. This approach also works for students.

Pressure points

- Walking Talking Mock approach where young people are walked through all of the process, so they understand what is coming.
- For KS4 and KS5 young people, ensure that they have a run through of an exam set up series (finding their candidate number, understanding what surname and forename is, filling out the front of the paper, understanding the role of invigilators).
- Identify what motivates them and demotivates them (check out the Build Up: Class of 24 package for PiXL members which takes them through some key questions to ask themselves).

- Hold 1:1s with staff who feel under pressure: ask questions like, ‘what is the most important?’, ‘what is getting in the way of progress?’, ‘how can I best support you?’ ‘If my answer was yes, what would you ask for to help?’
- For KS4/5 having a check in and check out process around sitting exams – where do they come in? What is their experience? Who is there to help them and debrief?
- Breakfast clubs and after school clubs (especially for young people who may not be eating at home or who may need facilities at school to be able to concentrate and do work.

This is just a start of thinking about how we can help reduce fear. We have to identify the fear and what is behind it and then (and only then) can we find the right approach to help ourselves and others.



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