

Family Solutions Mental Health Event in Harlow

15th April 2015



What the team did/Why we did it

The purpose of this program was for our families to explore their thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the environment. Even though, the theme was mental health, it wasn't necessarily tailored for families with mental health issues but for all Family Solutions families by raising their awareness of mental health and the challenging the stigma surrounding it.

It was also an opportunity for our families to bond and get to know each other through one common theme. The day was organised with the help of all the team members. All our families were invited weeks prior to the event, schools were also informed to enable parents to pick their children early from school to join us.

What took place?

The day was colourful and packed with different activities; such as relaxation, stress indicators' sessions and piñata time. We had art, storytelling and play sessions; where families used different colours and tools to produce wonderful works of art relating to their feelings, experiences or anything that comes into mind to understand and express their emotions. The cooking session was for families to bond over a variety of healthy food and this was organised in way that, each family went in session by session to enable them to have that quality time together.

We also ran a mindfulness session which offered tools to explore the human condition in all its variety. This activity was a way of de-stressing, letting go of individual bad thoughts and concentrating on positive things which in the ideal world can be very challenging. We also had a worry balloon session which was really popular, the ideology of the "worry balloon" was to write your worries in a piece of paper and put into the balloon and to let go after the session. This activity was an individual choice but all the families seem to have joined in without hesitation.

We had verbal feedback from our families

- *"We really had a fantastic time!"*
- *"Mum said she loved the balloons, watching them all go up!"*
- *"Dad added all those worries flying away in the sky!"*

- "A little boy said best day ever"!
- "Another mum said, it's a shame my balloon got stuck on the houses"