



KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2020

Hello to all knitters, crocheters and stitchers. A big “Thank You” goes to all who have sent in items over the winter – the therapists are unanimous in their praise of your fantastic work!



What's in this Newsletter?

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LATEST NEWS

We've had a busy winter, and have helped more therapists all over the UK than ever before, including: Child Safeguarding and Child Protection social work teams, mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools, Special Schools, sexual abuse charities, adoption and fostering agencies, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, independent children's therapists, art therapists, disabled charities and child psychologists.

You'll be able to read in this Newsletter, and also on the newly updated website, some fantastic feedback from recipients of your items, they are all in awe of your talents!

Waiting lists continue to grow though, so we'd like to appeal to you to ask your friends or relatives if they would like to make items for us too. There is now a downloadable publicity flyer on the "Donate Items" page of the website. We'd be grateful if you can think of anywhere locally that might be willing to display it, eg. local library, yarn shop etc. If you are a member of a local group such as the WI, Countrywomen's Association, Siroptimists etc. it's likely that many will be knitters, so please tell them about the charity.

If you've recently been having trouble reading the website on your mobile phone, that problem is now sorted out (we hope!!), so the formatting should now be correct.

The website has recently been updated – much of the information is the same, but there is a brand new Gallery featuring as many of your items as was possible. Take a look and see if you can spot one of yours! Apologies to anyone whose item wasn't featured this time.

LATEST REQUESTS FROM THERAPISTS

- **Play therapists do work known as “mirror work”.** Using 2 monsters, one for the child, one for the therapist, the child’s remarks and thoughts are echoed back by the therapist. For this they’d like 2 identical monsters. So we’d like to request that sometimes you send in **2 identical monsters, and exactly the same size and colour.**
- Some therapists have specifically requested **zips for the mouths of their monsters,** as they say it’s very effective for pretending that the monster has gobbled up the worry. As you’ll see from our patterns, zips are not essential, especially as there’s a cost implication, but if you are able to add a zip to some of them, where the pattern allows, that would be appreciated.
- Please make **pockets deep enough** for several worry papers folded up – sadly many children have multiple worries and there needs to be enough space please.
- We now need fewer of the little hand sized “worry puppets”, we don’t get as many requests for those. If you’ve already made some please send them, but for the moment please concentrate on the **larger stuffed worry monsters, and the hand puppet family sets and professionals sets** which are our most requested items.
- At the moment we have a backlog of Emotiknits without faces, which are waiting to be finished off this end, so if you’re not doing the faces please knit other items for the time being and then we’ll let you know when we need more. (If you’ve just started some, or are about to send some, please send them anyway.) **Fully finished Emotiknits with faces are of course still much needed.**

Child Behaviour Management workers with our items



RECENT FEEDBACK FROM RECIPIENTS OF OUR ITEMS

Louise – Children’s Therapist – SV2, Derbyshire, supporting survivors of sexual violence.

We are absolutely blown away with our packages! Thank you so much, we can see how these monsters are going to be so useful for the children we work with. Thank you, they are amazing! Everyone who has seen them so far is so excited!!!

Elly – Child Therapist, Derbyshire

I am so impressed with this work you have set up. The idea and the items that are produced are absolutely excellent. I am an art therapist, I work within a primary school with children who have experienced domestic violence, family separation, have worries and struggle with mainstream education. I also have a private practice where I work with children who have been sexually abused, are looked after in foster care or residential homes and also children who have experienced loss or separation. I use puppets regularly for the children to explore their stories in a way that feels safe for them, consider the reactions of others and learn about communication and expression. The type of puppets that your skilled volunteers produce are just not available anywhere.

I am overwhelmed by the variety, the skills involved and the designs of the puppets. I am so excited to be able to offer these to the children I work with and see the stories we make. I feel very privileged to be able to have this in my therapy kit. It’s a fantastic project – lots and lots of luck for the years to come and thank you to you and your talented makers.

Lucy, Child Counsellor, Special School, Ormskirk, Lancs,

I just wanted to thank you for the amazing Worry Monsters which arrived today. They truly are very special and will make a huge difference to the children in our School. Many of your children have a diagnosis of Autism and/or communication difficulties. These Worry Monsters offer such a natural way for the children to express their feelings which they can often find difficult to articulate, especially our children with additional needs. Many Thanks.

Sophie, Special School, Wrexham

Dear Clare, firstly I'd like to say that what this organisation is doing is just wonderful and it makes me wish that I could knit! I am an Occupational Therapist working in a school for children aged 6-16 with complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health challenges. Lots of our students have experienced unimaginable things and I am forever in awe of them; the fact most get up every morning to face the day and come to school - which is often their safe place. We have a number of young people who struggle to articulate their feelings, often relying on those adults who know them well to support them through their understanding of how they feel, and find strategies to help them process those difficult emotions. I think the worry monsters have the potential to have a huge impact on our young people, a way of removing the worry from their minds and to not get into the

dangerous spiral of ruminating on that worry, under the guidance of myself and our other therapists.

Kerry, Independent Child Therapist, Kettering

Wow wow wow! I've just opened the parcel and I am ecstatic and so privileged to have received them! Please send my many thanks to the beautiful people that make these. If you are looking for people to help make more please let me know and I will pass on the details to the local WI. Again... thank you with all my heart, these will be a greatly used resource in my play therapy practice xxx

Clair, ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), Dorchester, Dorset.

Thank you so, so much!!!!!!! I was blown away by these amazing worry dolls, these will be invaluable to my practice and I cannot thank you enough for such a wonderful resource. The dolls will help many of our 450 children here and please keep my name on the list!!!! I am happy to take anything you have spare, as a full time Emotional Literacy Support Assistant and trainee Counsellor, these dolls are pure gold to me. Thank you again for your hard work and kindness, it is so appreciated.

Ann, Family Support Worker, Lancashire

OMG. I have received my worry monsters, I have tears in my eyes, they are amazing and will be so useful in helping the children that I work with. You are so very clever. Thank you so much. I will forward a donation to help with resources. Ann x

Bernie, Nurture Specialist, Primary school, Swindon

Please send a HUGE thank you to all your volunteer knitters for the fantastic set of worry monsters you gave us! They are amazing and I have already been able to use them working with a child whose parents split up over the Christmas holidays and another who is a selective mute and was able to use the monsters to help her communicate her feelings! Thank you so much for such a wonderful resource!

Fostering Support worker

Fantastic Clare! Just opened the 2 packets of Worry Eaters. We Fostering Support Workers are so very grateful, the worry eaters and puppets will massively enhance our 1-1 work with young children. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Tracy, ELSA, Primary School, Dorchester, Dorset

I just wanted to let you know I have received the puppets. I was completely and totally bowled over when I opened the box!! I just cannot thank you enough. The puppets are all absolutely amazing! Thank you so so much. Please send my thanks to your team too. What an amazing charity you are.

**A NEW WORRY MONSTER PATTERN “TOOTHY THE WORRY EATER”
pattern kindly donated by sisters Vanessa and Linda.**



What a fine fellow he is! And how the children are going to love him!

The new pattern for this worry eater is on the website “Patterns for Worry Monsters” page, or by following this link – press Control and then just click on the link below.

https://23037fec-f7ba-468d-90e2-4a42a62cc5af.filesusr.com/ugd/bde73b_79464c7630f24174bf4581f6fcd0c9de.pdf

TOOTHY THE WORRY EATER GALLERY

To give you inspiration for the various ways it can be done!



NEW, IMPROVED PATTERN FOR KNITTED MALE/FEMALE CHARACTERS

Knitters have said that the old boy and girl hand puppet patterns could be improved, so there is now a new, improved pattern on the website “Patterns for Hand Puppets” page. Or you can access the pattern by pressing Control and clicking on the link below.

https://23037fec-f7ba-468d-90e2-4a42a62cc5af.filesusr.com/ugd/bde73b_6062571eeac448f5a51cf8aec945270a.pdf



The hand puppet pattern is the basis for all of our sets of puppets.

The most requested puppets are the family sets. These consist of **Mum, Dad, Gran, Grandad, boy(s) and girl(s)**. Each of these puppets is double faced, with a **happy smiling face on one side and a sad face with downturned mouth on the other**.

The family puppets are used in role play to work through children’s troubling situations. You can find more about why they are helpful on the website.

Female puppets can be made either with skirt or trousers. Choice of colours and hairstyle indicate gender. There are lots of ideas for creating family members on the Gallery page of the website.

The Professionals Set is also much in demand. These puppets represent the people with whom children in trouble may come into contact: doctor, nurse, policeman, teacher, social worker and judge. These puppets have one face, the smiling face. The reverse of the puppet will show the back of the person it represents.

Although the puppets are sent out in full sets, and we love to receive complete sets, please don’t feel that you *have* to knit everything. Knit what you enjoy.

We also welcome **Emotiknits** (please see patterns on the website), and also **Transgender** puppets, which should be male one side and female on the other, to help young people with gender issues.

WORKSHOPS MAKING EMOTIKNITS AND HAND PUPPETS

We are immensely grateful to Val Holmes, our talented knitter and designer of the Emotiknits, for her help in setting up and delivering several talks and workshops about Knit-for-Nowt in our local area. She very ably described the background to the charity, explained the need for our items and illustrated her talks with plenty of actual monsters and puppets which she had made.

During the workshops knitters were shown the basic principals of the Emotiknits design, (see website for patterns for those), and some knitters chose to begin some hand puppet family characters with happy/sad sides. Attendees were enthusiastic about making items for us, and were keen to carry on in the future. Our grateful thanks go to Val for her fantastic input.

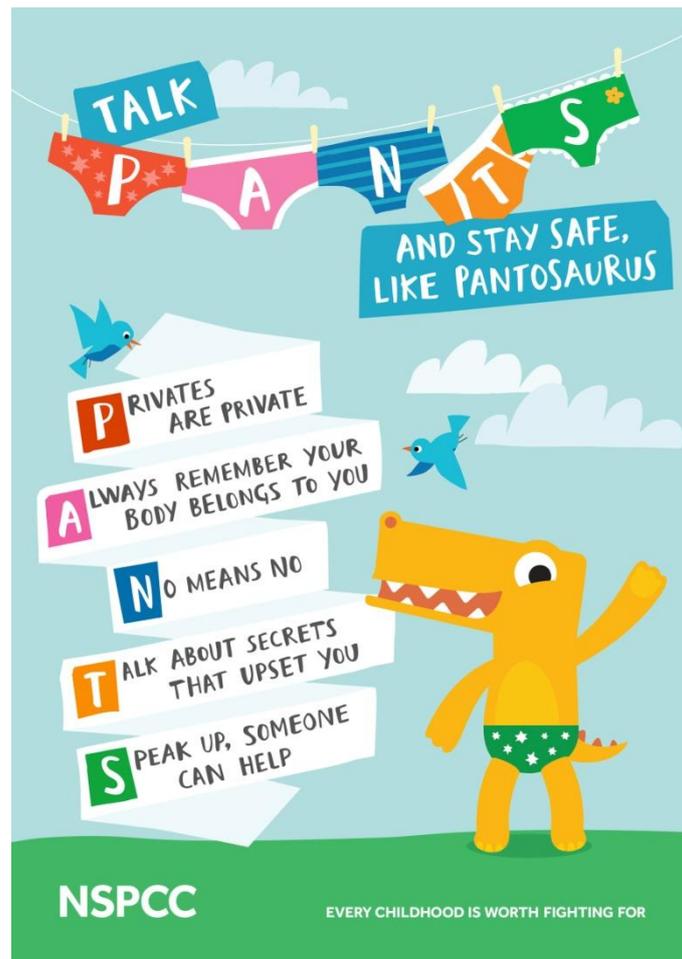
Here's Val with her monster



When we started we put a post up on the social workers' "free resources" Facebook page offering our items, and we were absolutely swamped with requests within the first hour – so much so that the post had to be removed! 75 teams from all over the UK applied! As time has gone by, the vast number of enquiries asking for monsters or hand puppets now come from therapists who have seen their colleagues using our items. Requests now come in most days. However, as stated on page 2, we do still very much need new knitters/crocheters/stitchers to satisfy this demand, and to try to get the waiting lists down, so anything you can do to spread the word would be very helpful.

PANTS!

Our basic worry monster pattern incorporates lots of pattern additions which can be made and added to your monster. It has now been taken up by lots of knitters, and is proving a great success. Adding legs and arms means that we now have monsters capable of being used with the NSPCC “Pants Programme”. This programme, now rolled out across primary schools in the UK, is to prevent and treat child sexual abuse by teaching the “PANTS” principals:



Please feel free to make a pair of pants for your monster, but we do have a supply of knitted pants in various sizes so the chances are that we'll be able to match them up and pop a pair on your monster for you. If you'd like to just send in a parcel of pairs of pants that'd be great too. The pattern for the pants is on the website or by following this link:

https://23037fec-f7ba-468d-90e2-4a42a62cc5af.filesusr.com/ugd/bde73b_f3a04689f7814bf48b54db4e3a644738.pdf

Since we introduced these they have been specifically requested by many workers, which is a sad situation, as there is such a problem around this issue, but at least we feel we are aiding the therapists in their work with these children.

Here's a mini-gallery of some of your monsters with legs and other features. Please see the new Gallery on the website for more ideas.



EXAMPLES OF TEAMS WHICH HAVE RECEIVED ITEMS FROM US

The Witherslack Group

is an independent, special needs education, schools and care programmes provider, offering a therapeutic provision. It is the leading provider of specialist education and care for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs, communication difficulties, (autistic spectrum disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, speech, language and communication needs), ADHD and complex learning needs.

SV2

works with victims/survivors of sexual violence and abuse to inform, support, protect and empower them. It's a charity based in Derbyshire and includes forensic medical examinations, crisis worker support, an advice line and support from Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs). They work in partnership with the police, but independently. They provide a range of therapy services for children, including art therapy for ages 0-13.

Play Therapy

The aim of play therapy is to decrease those behavioural and emotional difficulties that interfere significantly with a child's normal functioning. Inherent in this aim is improved communication and understanding between the child and his parents. A play therapist usually works with children aged three to 11, using play as a communication tool to understand their world and to help them deal with emotional distress and trauma. They help children and their families work through difficult life issues and experiences, including abuse and neglect.

Child Protection Social Workers

are responsible for investigating any allegations of child abuse, endangerment, neglect, or other circumstances in which a child or children may not be safe in a current living situation. There are many forms of abuse and neglect, and children's social workers use worry monsters and puppets to encourage the child to tell them what's been happening in their lives, and in many cases of abuse the child has been told that they must not tell an adult what is going on. The child will often feel able to tell a monster, where they would be too frightened to tell an adult.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)

are specialist teaching assistants with a wealth of experience of working with children. ... Their aim is to remove the barriers to learning and to have happy children in school and at home. "Emotions Intervention" is led by an ELSA and covers recognising, labelling and expressing the six basic emotions of happy, sad, angry, scared, surprised and disgusted. That's why we try to provide monsters and puppets with as many of those emotions as we can, including our "Mojo" worry monsters and our "Emotiknits".

A full list of all the teams which have received items from Knit-for-Nowt can be found on the website, along with a huge amount of other information.

A BIG thank you goes out to you if you've sent any items in – and I can't really put it any better than a therapeutic play practitioner in Slough, who recently received items from us and simply replied (and this is exactly what she wrote!):

“You guys are amaziinnnnngggggg.”

So please do continue to send in your wonderful monsters and puppets – we need every single knitter we can get, and you'll be helping in a really important and direct way.

“Looked After Children Through Care” team, Wiltshire



Clare Allan, organiser, Knit-for-Nowt February 2020 www.knitfornowt.org

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