

## PARENT INFORMATION

### Travelling along The Highway

The metaphor of 'The Highway' draws the analogy of us all similarly travelling along 'The Highway of Life' – AND meeting up with some common - but also different - events. There is one certainty however, and that is that we will all encounter challenging circumstances along the way – some short-lived, others more enduring and others completely random occurrences. To deal with these events, we need to problem-solve, to find solutions for how to move past and beyond them – and perhaps to avoid them in the first place. **Little Highway Heroes** calls these difficulties 'BUMPS' – and they come in 3 sizes of Little, Medium and Big.

Then there are also events that are larger than a big BUMP – events that have the ability to significantly impact on your Highway journey, and where perhaps you may lose your way, arrive at your destination very late, or at the very least, cause some sort of diversion and 'off-track' behaviour. These are called 'HAZARDS.'

Developing skills to deal with BUMPS and HAZARDS is fundamental to continuing on your journey, and in the metaphor of The Highway, these skills are called TOOLS. TOOLS can be learned by everyone - and then practised - so that the traveller becomes more skilful at using them and hence dealing with the BUMPS and HAZARDS they meet. A child who is using their TOOLS to deal with circumstances is a LITTLE HIGHWAY HERO.

The 5 lessons of The Highway are:

- Travelling Along The Highway
- BUMPS on The Highway
- TOOLS on The Highway
- Supa Thinkin on The Highway
- Calming Down on The Highway



Let's look at what each of these lessons explores.

#### **Travelling Along The Highway**

This is an introduction to the over-riding metaphor of everyone being on a journey of travelling along The Highway of Life. The language of the various concepts is introduced, and the occurrences of ups and downs along The Highway is normalised.

#### **BUMPS on The Highway**

BUMPS are defined as difficulties that everyone meets as they travel along The Highway. BUMPS come in different sizes – Small, Medium and Big. When a BUMP is met, a TOOL is helpful for coping with, or solving, the difficulty.



### TOOLS

TOOLS are skills that everyone can learn – and use – to help them to deal with difficulties that occur while travelling along The Highways. TOOLS are taught in 3 parts: 'Think', 'Say' and 'Do.' The 'Think' component introduces the children to the role that positive and helpful or negative and unhelpful thinking has in determining our response to challenges and adversities. Our thoughts are defined as being mental processes that occur in our brain – in a similar way to that of vehicles travelling along the Traffic Lanes on a Highway. Thoughts in our brain also travel along pathways – or Traffic Lanes – and 2 different Lanes are defined, characterised by the type of thoughts they carry. They are 'The Stinkin Thinkin' (negative, pessimistic) and 'The Supa Thinkin' (optimistic and rational) Traffic

Lanes. Which Traffic Lane your thoughts are travelling along, will determine much about how you define problems – as a BUMP or a HAZARD – how you think about them, your problem-solving approach, and the outcomes achieved.

The 'Say' component of the TOOL considers what the child can actually say using proactive, confident and assertive words to get past BUMPS.

The 'Do' component of the TOOL refers to the child's body language and behaviour – it's often referred to as 'Whole Body Confidence.'

Think-Say-Do TOOLS give children a comprehensive package of thinking, words and actions in responding to a BUMP or a HAZARD.

#### Supa Thinkin

Supa Thinkin is a thinking style that is based in optimism and a 'can do' attitude. It has a positive, proactive approach to finding a solution to whatever BUMP occurs during the journey along The Highway. Supa Thinkin is a TOOL in itself, as it enables both an attitude – and the process - of being solution-focused to dealing with challenges. The opposite of Supa Thinkin is 'Stinkin Thinkin' – a negative appraisal that highlights difficulties and diminishes solutions. It can be both a BUMP and a HAZARD.

#### Calming Down

Calming Down is a fundamental TOOL of emotional self-regulation and management. It is defined as a TOOL that everyone can – and needs – to learn, to help them to deal with BUMPS and HAZARDS. The TOOL of Calming Down comprises a set of steps to manage emotional arousal in a healthy way. Patterns of breathing and Supa Thinkin empowers children to be 'the boss' of their emotions. Calming Down requires Supa Thinkin, and the title of 'Calming Down Supa Thinkin' is also sometimes used.

**Reflection Point:** How are you travelling along on The Highway of your life? BUMPS and even HAZARDS happen to everyone and having a range of TOOLS is an important part of caring for you. Are you caring for you? What are your self-care TOOLS?