



Issue 3  
01.05.20

# NEWSLetter

"However you feel is okay. However you are coping makes sense. And we will get through this. One day we will get through and this will be a story of how you found your way through. Day-by-day, step-by-step. We can do this; we have to"

*Emily Rosen*



**Mental Health Awareness week** runs from **18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020**. The theme is **Kindness**. Acts of kindness can have a profound effect on our mental health. Find out more on **Page 4**.

If you have anything you'd like submitted to the NEWSLetter or if you have any comments or feedback, please email **Pauline** at [pauline@new-solutions.co.uk](mailto:pauline@new-solutions.co.uk)

We warmly welcome all our readers to the third edition of our **NEWSLetter**. As we enter week 6 of lockdown, we hope that this issue continues to bring themes and information that is relevant to you.

This week, in **NEWS from U** on **Page 2**, we are delighted to feature some of our younger readers. They have written in and shared their experiences during the lockdown. Thank you to each one of the children for their contributions.

As the weeks progress, it has been so heartening to hear about the terrific partnership work that is happening locally to ensure that our children, young people, families and the wider community have support available when they need it most. **Page 3** has a spotlight on some of this support. It is important to recognise that there is so much more good work happening across Angus and more locally in each town, but it is impossible to try to capture all of this in our **NEWSLetter**. Over the coming weeks we intend to bring you more news on this. We would welcome any readers writing in to tell us about their experiences and about any projects that they would like us to feature.

Continuing on the theme of asking for help and support, we have two articles on **Page 5** and **Page 6**. This pandemic is a collective trauma that we are all experiencing just now. Our colleague Laura has written an article on the impact of COVID-19 on our children & young people from a trauma perspective. She has provided helpful examples of the everyday things that parents and carers can do to support their children at this time. The other article is about parenting throughout this extraordinary time and the reality that sometimes this may be very hard and can affect how we might feel about our children in the moment. However, the take-home message is that throughout this time of intense stress and pressure, we need to be kind and forgiving to ourselves and be able to find ways to repair relationships when they have been hurt.

If you have questions or are struggling, it is important to reach out to others and ask for help. The more informed you are and the more you understand your child, the better you can provide them with the support, nurturing and guidance they need. NEWSolutions Associates are available to provide support, advice and guidance. Contact NEWSolutions: [info@new-solutions.co.uk](mailto:info@new-solutions.co.uk) and a member of the team will get in touch.

In the last NEWSLetter we spoke about the importance of play as a way of helping children manage through the pandemic. **The International Play Association (IPA)** has published a fantastic resource with lots of helpful information and ideas; we highly recommend checking this out. **The Stay-At-Home-Superheroes** is a story to help children feel empowered to stay at home and to help the fight against coronavirus. More information on these and other helpful resources can be found on **Page 7** and **Page 8**.

**Healthy Regards, the NEWSolutions Team**

# NEWS from U

This week some of our younger readers have written in to tell us about their experiences during the lockdown and to share pictures of how they have been keeping busy in this time. A big thank you to the children for sharing their experiences.

## STAY SAFE (An acrostic poem)

- Stay safe rainbow poster on my window.
- Talk about how you feel.
- Avoid too much news.
- You must stay indoors to save lives from coronavirus.
- Start a new hobby – mine is keeping a diary.
- Active time with Joe Wicks and Cosmic Yoga.
- Family time – enjoy it.
- Exercise with a daily walk keeping 2m apart.

By Bethany Leach, age 7.



By Bethany & Olivia Leach

## Lockdown Diary

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March

\* I walked to school with my daddy.

\* At breaktime I play on the trimtrail with my friends.

\* We work on handwriting, number and reading with my teacher.

\* At lunchtime we play manhunt together. It is great fun.

\* After school I go to highland dancing. I concentrate really well.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April

\* I walked downstairs to my playroom for my homeschool.

\* At "breaktime" I played with my dog.

\* I worked with my mum at home. I drew rainbows for my neighbours.

\* At lunchtime I chat with my big brothers.

\* Once my mum has finished work we take Teddy, my dog on a walk. All my clubs have stopped.

## COVID-19

Life has changed for me. What I miss most is seeing my good friends. I do like that I spend more time with my mum, dad, brothers and dog. We are not going to be in lockdown forever. We will all be together again.

Verity, P3,  
Lochside



Pictured is Lewis Cameron from Maisondieu Primary School in his Outdoor Classroom.

Right - Lewis's drawing of a human body. Lewis then labelled the different body parts.



Left - A game of hangman - Lewis chose a tricky word - archipelago.

# Spotlight on Angus Support

**Angus Third Sector Collaborative**  
Support is only a phone call away

The Angus Third Sector Collaborative is made up of third sector organisations, who work together to best support the needs of the people of Angus. At this unprecedented time, services continue to operate - 'Support is only a phone call away'.

**COVID-19 support**  
Humanitarian Assistance  
Angus Response Team

Keeping people at the **HAART** of Angus

The **Tayside Cares** website helps isolated and vulnerable Angus residents get the confidential support they need during the coronavirus outbreak.

If you need help and support, or if you are worried that someone else (a friend, relative or neighbour) needs help and support, for whatever reason then go to [www.taysidecares.co.uk](http://www.taysidecares.co.uk)

For those who can't access the internet, phone **03452 777 778** to access this confidential support. Phone lines are open **Monday – Friday, 10am until 8pm** and **Saturday – Sunday from 10am until 2pm**.

You will be linked directly to a dedicated team who can offer support with the supply of food, necessities and other vital assistance.

**COVID-19 Update**  
In December 2019, we made a decision to tackle food poverty and insecurity in our local communities. We are well on our way to realising our vision of opening Angus's first social supermarket. **BUT WE NEED TO ACT NOW**. Community First UK will concentrate all our efforts on supporting our local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing **S-Mart Food Packs** to those in need. The regular supplies people check our Facebook page @communityfirstangus

The **Community First COVID-19 S-mart Grocery Pack** initiative went live on 18<sup>th</sup> April as a response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Many people may be facing real tough financial pressures. Regardless of circumstance, if you have worries or difficulties about paying the rent or mortgage, utilities and putting food on the table, support is at hand.

The S-mart Grocery Pack initiative aims to alleviate some of these worries and reduce additional stresses by providing free grocery packs twice a week to those in need.

Grocery packs include a selection of fresh fruit, veg, meat, bread and dairy products as well as staple cupboard supplies.

Ordering is simple – on a **Tuesday** and **Saturday** morning between **9.00am** and **10.00am** call **07592626519**. You will need to provide your name and how many people your pack needs to feed. Your grocery pack will be prepared for collection on the same day.

If you can't collect your parcel, then arrangements can be made - or your pack to be collected on your behalf. Donations are welcomed but there is no obligation to do so.

**penumbra**  
your way to a brighter future

**Angus Wellness Services**

Penumbra offer personalised and recovery focussed support to adults who are concerned about their mental health. Services are accessible to all adults in Angus (16 and over) and continue to operate during this time. Based on the belief that recovery is achievable for everyone, services are designed to promote positive wellbeing and support people in their individual recovery journeys.

One of the services Penumbra offers is **Angus Suicide Prevention and Support Service (ASPSS)**. This service is available to adults who experience thoughts of suicide or who may have attempted suicide. Support is also available for family members, carers or friends of adults experiencing suicidal thoughts. During this time, telephone and email support is offered; all of which will promote safety, wellbeing and recovery. There is no application form or waiting list for this service. **Freephone 0800 135 7899** Email [aspss@penumbra.org.uk](mailto:aspss@penumbra.org.uk). The service operates Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm.

To find out more about Penumbra services in Angus and how to access these visit <http://www.penumbra.org.uk>.



# The Power of Kindness



## The Health Benefits of Kindness

### Helping others feels good

Evidence suggests that helping others promotes changes in our brains linked to happiness. Also, by helping others, it encourages us to be active, and to increase our support networks; both of which can improve self-esteem.

### Creates a sense of belonging

Helping others helps us feel a sense of belonging, we can make new friends, connect with our community and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

### Helps keep a sense of perspective

Being aware of your own act of kindness, as well as showing gratitude to the things you are grateful for can increase feelings of happiness and satisfaction by having a more positive outlook on your personal circumstance.

### It's contagious

Acts of kindness improves feelings of confidence, happiness and optimism. Others may feel inspired to 'pay it forward', repaying the kindness they received from you, adding to the sense of positive community.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/doing-good-does-you-good/health-benefits-altruism>

This pandemic has changed life as we know it. We continue to adapt to an evolving 'new normal' that will undoubtedly change again. Like many, I feel an acute sense of loss; I miss my family, friends, the routine of work, and going to the gym. However there are things about the situation that I am enjoying and I hope these continue as lockdown is lifted.

One of the things that I have gained in all this is that sense of connection to my community. As a kid I would check in with my elderly neighbours, dropping off my dad's freshly caught trout or a plate of tea and in turn they taught me things like knitting and making pom-poms.

With the pandemic, I have felt that there is a real renewed sense of community and I have felt proud to be part of this. One of the things that has struck me is the acts of kindness demonstrated in how people are looking out for and helping one another. The profound impact this can have on improving emotional wellbeing; regardless of whether we are giving or receiving kindness cannot be underestimated.

Kindness has been announced as the theme for Mental Health Week which runs from 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Mark Rowland, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation highlighted the importance of rediscovering kindness within our daily lives.

Mental Health Awareness Week will celebrate the millions of acts of kindness that are important to our health and wellbeing. Mark says that:

*"Kindness unlocks our shared humanity and is central for our mental health. It has the potential to bring us together with benefits for everyone, particularly at times of great stress. One thing we have seen all over the world is that kindness is prevailing in uncertain times, helping people to connect and communities to cope with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic".*

So if acts of kindness have the power to significantly improve mental health and wellbeing, you may already be thinking of acts of kindness you can do. You might also be considering that lockdown may make this trickier. Below are some ideas –

- Make a cup of tea for someone you live with
- Join in on the Thursday night clap to show appreciation to frontline workers
- Help with some jobs around the house
- Arrange to watch a film at the same time as a friend and video call
- Tell someone you know that you are proud of them
- Send a funny meme to a friend
- Spend time playing with your pet
- Check in with your vulnerable neighbours

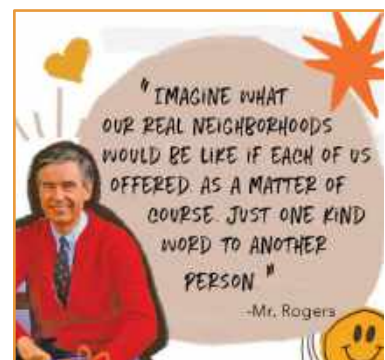


Image Courtesy of <https://inspirekindness.com>

“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.”

Amelia Earhart

The key message for me is that regardless of whether I do or receive a kind act, I am supporting my own mental health and wellbeing as well as that of the other person. That to me is kindness in its greatest form.

If you would like to share any stories or pictures about kindness for our next NEWSLetter please email me at [pauline@new-solutions.co.uk](mailto:pauline@new-solutions.co.uk)

You could also share on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, #KindnessMatters. – social media details on page 9.

# The Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People from a Trauma Perspective

By Laura Craddock



Over the last few weeks, I have had many telephone discussions with children, young people and their families. It has felt important to remind them that COVID 19 is a traumatic event for everyone.

Essentially, our country is in crisis. So, it is important to think about how this crisis impacts on you, your reactions to your children's feelings and their behaviour. From a trauma perspective, this will have an enormous impact on your children's ability to cope, recover and build resilience.

With this in mind, it is useful to consider some of the 'basic guidelines for those living or working with traumatised children'.

A useful starting point is the work of Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Bruce Perry – Child Trauma Academy who offers clear guidance for caretakers. I have summarised the main ones and provided simple examples of how as parents/carers you can apply these on a day to day basis.

## **Provide a consistent, predictable pattern for the day**

Children need structure to their day and consistent times for meals, schoolwork, playtime, chores and exercise helps to provide this. When the day includes new or different activities, explain this to children. It is important for children to know that their caretakers are in control. During a crisis, children can feel frightened if they sense that the people caring for them are themselves anxious, confused and disorganised. If you find yourself feeling this way, simply help your child understand why and explain that these reactions are normal and will pass.

## **Don't be afraid to talk about the traumatic event**

It is important to remember that children do not benefit from 'not thinking about it' or 'putting it out of their minds'. If children sense that caretakers are upset about the event, they will not bring it up. In the long run, this makes the child's recovery more difficult.

If your child brings the subject up on their own, be ready to listen, answer questions and most importantly provide comfort and support. Try not to avoid discussion, provide a simple verbal explanation or narrative as this will give children something to hang onto and contain difficult feelings. Children often benefit from a sense that a trusted adult is alongside them.

## **Discuss your expectations for behaviour and be clear about consequences**

It is always important but particularly essential during a crisis to make sure children are clear about rules and boundaries and the consequences for breaking these. These give children a sense of security and a feeling of safety. Always be consistent when applying consequences and always fully utilize positive reinforcement and rewards. At all times, avoid physical discipline.

## **Give the child choices and a sense of control**

During a crisis, it is common for children to feel that they do not have control of the situation. This often leads to children feeling helpless, those children tend to experience more severe stress symptoms. If a child is given some choice or some element of control in an activity or in any interaction with an adult, they will feel safer and more comfortable and this will aid them being able to think, feel, and act in a more age appropriate way. So even providing choices in day to day decisions, such as what breakfast cereal to have or what filling to put in their sandwich will help them feel a sense of control.

**Be aware for changes in their behaviour and functioning** – It is common for children to regress during times of crisis, so changes in behaviour such as bed-wetting, tantrums, loss of acquired skills i.e. ability to tie shoelaces are simply a reaction to the current situation. It is important to try and comfort and be tolerant of the child's emotional and behavioural problems. These symptoms will wax and wane, sometimes for no apparent reason.

**Protect the child** - Do not hesitate to cut short or stop activities that are upsetting for children. If you observe increased symptoms in a child that occur in a certain situation or following exposure to certain activities or movies, avoid them. Try to restructure or limit these activities to avoid re-traumatization.

**Talk with your child** – Research shows that the more children know about who, what, where, why and how the adult world works, the easier it is to make sense of it. The unknown and unpredictability are the two things that will make a traumatised child more anxious and fearful. They may become hyperactive, impulsive, anxious, aggressive with more sleep and mood problems. Without factual information, children tend to fill in the empty spaces to make a complete story or explanation. In most cases, the child's fears and phantasies are much more frightening than the truth.

Tell the child the truth, even if it is emotionally difficult. Try to make sure it is age appropriate and be prepared to repeat again and again, particularly for younger children. If you do not know the answer yourself, tell the child with honesty and openness as this will help the child trust. Give your child extra attention, particularly at bedtime and be available to children throughout the day.

**Look after yourself and do not be afraid to ask for help** - If your child's going through a crisis, there is a good chance that you will have experienced a level of stress too. You need to make sure you are emotionally equipped to help your child, so take time to yourself to charge your batteries and allow time to engage with activities that you enjoy. If you are distressed and having difficulties with your feelings, reactions or relationship with your children, it is important to seek support yourself.

# Parenting in Extra- Ordinary Times



*"What we don't need  
in the midst of struggle  
is shame for being  
human"*

*Brene Brown*

*"We're all  
imperfect  
parents  
and that's  
perfectly  
ok. Tiny  
humans  
need  
connection,  
not  
perfection"*

*L R Knost*

Suzanne Zeedyk is a developmental psychologist based in Dundee with a real passion for the power of human connection. In these unprecedented and unsettling times, she recently wrote a blog 'Fed up of Being Cooped up in Lockdown with the Kids?'

As we enter week six of lockdown, parents/carers may be experiencing lots of strong feelings from constantly being with their kids but being honest about this may be difficult. Fear of being judged as not doing a good enough job as a parent may cause many of us to deny or play down how we feel, and this can lead to feelings of isolation, shame and frustration.

Suzanne refers back to the last significant time in our history; to World War 2 and the work of Donald Winnicott, a paediatrician and psychoanalyst. He was interested in what society needed to recover from the effects of war and for him, the key was in how society supported parents. One of his most radical views was that there would be times when parents would dislike their children; that sometimes this would feel so intense that parents may feel they hate their child. Importantly, Winnicott reassured parents that this was normal and predictable; that parents were doing their best in extremely difficult and hard times and it did not make them bad parents for feeling as they did.

In the coronavirus pandemic, it may feel that it is impossible to meet the demands and expectations of our children. We may notice that we are emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed and we may feel we are not giving our children what they need. According to Suzanne, it is normal that children might have a hard time and not cope too well when they feel disappointed in their parents. Sometimes this will feel so intense that children may very well feel they hate their parents too. This isn't a child behaving badly, but a child trying their hardest in difficult and stressful times.

Winnicott 's view was that feelings of intense dislike are normal in healthy and loving relationships and that in society, parents need to feel permitted to be open about how they feel. Suzanne said that ironically, being able to accept you have uncomfortable and intense feelings makes life easier. Being able to sit with difficult feelings and accept they are normal in relationships means you don't have to be consumed by guilt, shame or defensiveness. So next time you have intense feelings or lose your temper with your child, instead of beating yourself up or hanging your head in shame, there are some things you can try instead:

**Forgive Yourself** – We all have regrets, none of us are perfect. If we can forgive ourselves, it becomes easier to reflect on what happened, what we have learnt from it and to take responsibility for our actions. Forgive yourself and move on.

**Apologise** – Genuinely saying 'sorry' to our children when we make a mistake strengthens the parent-child bond. It also benefits children in several ways. When you say sorry to your child and try to make things right, you are modelling empathy, honesty, courage and responsibility to your children. You are also showing your child that it's okay to make mistakes.

**Repair** – To have healthy, happy and stable relationships, research by Dr John Gottman shows that you need a magic relationship ratio of five positive interactions to every one negative interaction. So, after a fall out, it's important to balance out the effects of this with many positive interactions that help to reconnect and repair your relationship. An important thing to remember here is that the positive interactions need to be things that your child enjoys.

Suzanne's article 'Fed up of Being Cooped up in Lockdown with the Kids?' can be found at <http://www.suzannezeedyk.com/blog/>



In situations of crisis, playing is your child's way to cope



children as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In our last NEWSLetter, we spoke about the importance of play for children's emotional wellbeing and mental health, and how this should be encouraged as a way to help children during the coronavirus pandemic.

During times of crisis, play has a significant therapeutic role helping children recover a sense of normality and joy. The right to play is a fundamental right of

The International Play Association (IPA) has developed the *IPA Play in Crisis: Support for Parents and Carers* resource. This fantastic resource includes topics such as the importance of playing in times of crisis and how to respond to children's play needs. It also includes issues that may concern parents like children playing with difficult themes of loss, death and loneliness.

Find out more at - <http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/IPA-Play-in-Crisis-Booklet-for-parents-and-carers-2020.pdf>

Change is part of life and something we can't avoid. Some people adapt to change quickly whilst for others, this can be much more difficult.

The coronavirus pandemic has had an unprecedented change on how we live our lives. For many children, they may be experiencing a real sense of loss; loss of seeing friends, birthday parties and trips to the swimming pool for example.

However, with any change, this can be a time of opportunity and gain. It can be a really worthwhile activity to consider the changes from the perspective that it brings positives and gains too. For instance, a child may really miss their friends (a loss)



but are enjoying spending more time with their family (gain).

The Australian Childhood Foundation has released a social story that highlights not just the things we have lost due to Coronavirus, but the important things we have found.

This would be a great story to share with children and encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings about coronavirus and the things they have lost and found during this time.

Find out more at - <https://www.childhood.org.au/app/uploads/2020/04/MatildaTheoLR.pdf>



'The Stay at Home Superheroes', tells the story of William who becomes a stay-at-home superhero to help the fight against coronavirus. This is an empowering story of how children can stay at home and join the battle against coronavirus.

<https://www.sophiesstories.co.uk/stay-home->



Designed by children and young people from the Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament, **Mind Yer Time** has been created to support everyone who loves social media and screen time.

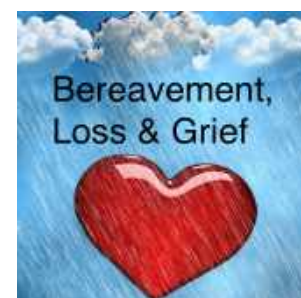
They have positive tips, stories and information for children and young people, to help them use their screen time positively! This may be particularly handy during the lockdown and where we might be having more screen time than normal.

There are specific sections for children aged 8-12, young people aged 13-25 and information for adults. Go to <https://mindyertime.scot>

The coronavirus pandemic has stopped life as we knew it in its tracks. Unfortunately, for some of us, we may have experienced the sudden death of a loved one and are grieving for their loss.

Grief is a normal reaction; there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Children experience grief in similar intensity to adults. However, their experience and understanding of death and how they express this may be different. Much depends on the child's age and stage of development. They may also flit in and out of grief.

Early, honest discussions with children and young people using simple language is very important.



There is lots of online sources of advice and support. Details of these can be found on page 7 of the NEWSLetter.

If you have concerns about talking to your children about any aspect of loss and bereavement or if you would like more advice, support or a telephone consultation please email [pauline@new-solutions.co.uk](mailto:pauline@new-solutions.co.uk) or [info@new-solutions.co.uk](mailto:info@new-solutions.co.uk) and a member of the team will contact you.

Here you will find links to articles and websites related to topics in the NEWSletter as well as other useful sources of information.

# Links & Helpful Information <sup>8</sup>

## Loss, Bereavement and Grief

**Cruse Bereavement Care** – Cruse have put together resources to support adults who are struggling with bereavement, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic - <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>

**Nurture UK** - The Bereavement Guide: Supporting Children & Young People Through Grief & Loss – A ready to hand booklet with comprehensive information including sections on children’s understanding of death, how to explain to children and the importance of using the correct language - [https://www.nurtureuk.org/sites/default/files/bereavement\\_box-booklet-cov19-edition-2020-web.pdf](https://www.nurtureuk.org/sites/default/files/bereavement_box-booklet-cov19-edition-2020-web.pdf)

**Winston’s Wish** - Website has lots of information and advice on supporting children through coronavirus. Includes topics such as telling a child someone is seriously ill or has died from coronavirus, how schools can support bereaved students and how to say goodbye if you can’t attend a funeral - <https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/>

## Regression and Sleep Regression (Some interesting articles)

**The Therapist Parent** - Many parents may be noticing that their child’s sleep has regressed since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. If so, this article from Krysten Trapell of the Therapist Aid may be of interest. You will also find lots of other tips and strategies for common issues that you may be experiencing - <https://www.thetherapistparent.com/post/sleep-worries>

**Psychology Today** – If you have noticed any regression in your child to earlier behaviours that they had grown out of, this is a sign your child may be stressed. This article has some handy tips and strategies to support you and your child - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/zero-six/202004/regression-in-the-time-coronavirus>

## Resources for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

**CAMHS Resources** - The purpose of this website is to make it easy for young people, parents, carers and professionals to access the wealth of helpful resources across the internet to support their mental health and emotional well-being needs - <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk>

**Wellbeing Resources Zone** - This site promotes access to information and resources for children, young people, parents, carers, families, organisations, professionals and communities on mental health and wellbeing. The site is always being updated as new resources become available or change so keep coming back and seeing what’s new - <https://www.wellbeingresourceszoneuk.com>

**Breathing Superpower Compilation: Kids Mindfulness** - Helps children strengthen their superpower of calm using four mindful games - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=iEEJT9cYsm0>

**Sesame Street** – Help children learn the power of belly breathing with Rosita from Sesame Street, to help them take control of big feelings - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xq3DwzX6MUw>

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