

Wakefield Future in Mind MHST Family Newsletter Autumn 2022

It's Autumn term 2022 and welcome to this first edition newsletter.

We are the Future in Mind Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in Wakefield and we offer support to your child's school.

We hope you find it helpful to learn a little bit more about our team and what we do. We've also included some activities that might fun to do together at home.

Who are we?

The MHST is a service that offers early intervention support. We visit all mainstream schools and colleges across the Wakefield District to promote positive emotional wellbeing.

Each mainstream school and college has a Senior Practitioner from our team linked to it. The Senior Practitioner makes plans and delivers different sessions and training in schools to improve emotional wellbeing for children and young people.

Some schools also have support from an Education Mental Health Practitioner who can support children using a cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) approach to help with things like worry management, low mood, panic and improving sleep hygiene.

Our support is offered in lots of different ways, this can include;

- One to one work or group work
- Consultations with parents or carers
- Assemblies or classroom sessions
- Staff training and support
- Parent/Carer information sessions

If school feels that any child would benefit from this type of emotional wellbeing support, then a member of staff from school will talk to you about this and they will make a referral to our team. We then offer consultation support to school to think about what support is going to be best.



This is Kath. She is the Senior Practitioner that visits your child's school.

She looks after her mental health by spending time with family and friends and being outside in nature.



This is Tracey. She is the Education Mental Health Practitioner that visits your child's school.

She looks after her mental health by connecting with friends.

Supporting your child's wellbeing

During the Christmas holidays children and their families can experience lots of different emotions, some positive ones and maybe some difficult ones.

The busy-ness, hustle and bustle and expectations that school holidays sometimes bring can cause us to feel stressed and at times overwhelmed. Something which will be really important this holiday is for you to support the children you care for to have some downtime to relax their body, calm their mind and balance their emotions. Calming strategies can be practiced alone, but could be even better if you can spend some time together and learn a little bit more about what you enjoy and how certain activities and practices can make you feel.

We've included some of our festive favourites you could try at home.

Relaxed breathing

Taking some time to take deep breaths be easier than you think, and the best thing is you can do it anywhere. Use this star to help by tracing around its edge with your fingers. Follow the instructions and let each side take 3-6 seconds.

Relaxed breathing works best with practice, so try to do it regularly throughout the



Dear _____

Kindness postcards

Why not spend some time writing a postcard, letter or drawing a picture for someone special to you.

You could write or draw about a favourite memory, tell them a story, let them know what you've been doing or even remind them of the reasons they are special to you.



Positive paperchains

All you need is some paper strips (re-using wrapping paper will work), glue, scissors and pens to make some beautiful positive paperchains.

Spend time together writing messages of positivity, kindness or write about something you are grateful for to make your paper chains even more special.

Children we have visited in recent weeks have told us about some of their favourite activities to do over the Christmas holidays. Here are some suggestions you too might want to try at home;

- Pyjama day with hot chocolate and a film that makes you smile.
- Going for a walk and looking at the festive decorations.
- Hosting a family quiz.
- Building a cardboard box igloo, fort, castle or spaceship and going on an imaginary adventure together.
- Going for a walk and making a nature collage with nature objects we find along the way.
- Hairbrush Karaoke.
- A sock puppet pantomime.

Maybe you will get chance to try some of these or have your own favourites which we would love to hear about next time you see us in school.



Festive yoga

Take some time to notice how your body feels when you practice some simple yoga stretches.

Imagine and practice what your body would look like if you were;

- Standing tall like a Christmas tree
- Curled up like a snowball
- Curvy like a candy cane
- Stretched out like a gingerbread man

A little bit on self-care-

Self-care is important for everyone, children and adults alike. Sometimes as parents and carers, we forget that we need to prioritise our own wellbeing basics to be able to help those we care for. Looking after emotional wellbeing is a little bit like an oxygen mask on an aeroplane, we must put our own before we can help others.

You might find over the holidays in particular that your own stress bucket becomes full more easily than usual, at which point it will be important to use your own emotional first aid kit (your coping strategies) to relieve the impact of that stress.

Have a think what that might look like for you, some ideas might be;

- Talking to someone who is supportive.
- Sitting in a space alone with a cup of tea.
- Getting outside in nature.
- Doing exercise.
- Having a bath.
- Doing some DIY.
- Replacing your phone with a book or a guided relaxation at bedtime.



What's also brilliant, is that by practicing using our own coping tools as adults, we are able to model positive ways of dealing with difficult feelings and experiences to our children too.

Where to get extra help

If a child or young person needs to talk they can call **Childline** Open 24/7. Chat to a counsellor online at www.childline.org.uk. Call them on **0800 111**.

If a young person or adult needs to talk to someone they can call the **Samaritans** on **116 123**. It's open 24/7.

If a child, young person or parent/carer needs to talk to someone at night time they can call **Nightowls** (between 8pm and 8am) on **0800 1488244** or text **07984392700**.

If you need to access help from a **food bank** you can find more information about what's available here <https://wakefield.cityofsanctuary.org/food-banks>. You could also ask school if they know about other local practical support in your area.

Warm Spaces are places in your local community where people can gather for free in a warm welcoming space and enjoy a drink and some food. Find out more here; <https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/more-money-in-my-pocket/warm-spaces>.