

Children and Young People's Newsletter



Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster

Welcome to our February Newsletter. You made it through one month of lockdown so give yourself a pat on the back. You are doing great! Hopefully this issue will give you some more information on how to stay well during such challenging times.

Parent section

National lockdown

The announcement of the third National Lockdown in England meant that unfortunately schools had to close. We understand this might be very frustrating both for children and young people who need to learn remotely as well as for parents who are worried about their children's wellbeing and their future. We hope that our tips below for parents on how to help children who are worried and anxious will be a good start to manage through these difficult times. Our **Infoline** where you can get more advice on mental health support for you or your child is now open on **077865 548530, Mon-Fri, 9am – 4pm (except Wednesdays)**.



Worries and anxiety in children

All children feel anxious at times. Sometimes these anxieties are connected to life experiences such as the pandemic and other things around them; other times they come from worries inside of them that they might not recognise or understand. As you know your child best you may help them to recognise that they are struggling and try to understand what's going on for them. This can make them feel less alone with their difficulties; and sometimes feel more able to do the things they are worried about or cope with them. Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawn, angry or agitated. Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention. Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them. If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.



Ways to manage your child's anxiety

If your child tends to worry about things that you don't have control of such as the pandemic, there are few things you can do:

1. Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the virus in words that they can understand depending on their age.
2. Try to limit their news intake and be mindful of social media which can be a source of misinformation.
3. Distract them from their thoughts. Ask them to:

Count back from 20 to 2



Imagine a big red STOP sign to stop your worries

Describe something you can see in detail

4. Shift the focus towards positive: suggest noticing the good in the world- take time to appreciate the positive together in what is going on around you and practice gratefulness.

Children and Young People's section

In the last newsletter we have shared with you some of the essential ways of staying well during lockdown such as exercising, sleep and diet. We want to continue to add to this list, as with schools mostly closed and lots of uncertainty ahead, children and young people's mental health has never been more important. This month we have an additional tip from Place2Be which are organising Children's Mental Health Week on 1-7 February 2021. Check out [Place2Be](#) website for more details and information on the events happening during that week.

Express yourself

This year's theme of the Children's Mental Health Week is Express Yourself which turns out to be one of the things that can really help you to stay emotionally well during the pandemic. There's so many benefits from being creative and it can be a lot of fun!

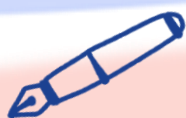
"Express yourself" is about finding creative ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas through things like art, writing, music, dance and doing things that make you feel good.

Being creative and expressing yourself can:

- help you to relax and de-stress
- generate the endorphins which can lift your mood, help you feel empowered, and create a sense of identity and achievement
- help to boost your self-esteem, connect with others, and give you purpose and meaning



Creativity



Not sure where to start? Feel free to check out those ideas to find something for yourself:

1. Creative writing – writing can be a great way to express your feelings. Sometimes it is much easier to write things down than saying them out loud and it can provide a great relief. Check [these resources](#) to give it a go!
2. Drawing or painting – there are many things that you can do with a piece of paper and pencil or crayons. Drawing and painting can be a fantastic outlet for our creativity so why not give it a go. Check [this website](#) for some ideas on drawing techniques.
3. Dance – dancing is a great way to move and at the same time express yourself. Dancing can make us feel free and music will help you to get off the couch. Just put on your favourite music and start moving. It's that easy!
4. Cooking and baking – making a dish from a list of ingredients can be an art! And a tasty one 😊. Why not try something new and cook or bake for or with your family and have fun together.
5. Everything else that you might find creative – the thing about creativity is there are no boundaries. It's all up to you, what you use to be creative and how you want to do it. So enjoy!

Express your feelings

As much as art can be a great way to express ourselves, sometimes our feelings can become difficult to manage. This can happen especially during such difficult times as the lockdown during which we can't see our friends in schools, some of our family members or cannot attend our favourite activities outside of our homes.

During such periods it is important that we share our feelings with others so that we are not bottling them up. You can also speak to your family, friends or your teacher at school who will also be able to refer you to one of our practitioners.

Some people might find it easier to share difficult feelings with people they don't know and that's also right. It very much depends on you, who you prefer to talk to. We are sharing some of the places where you can speak to someone anonymously about things that might bother you

1. [KOOOTH](#) – free chat with a counsellor
2. [The MIX](#) – free 1-2-1 chat with helpline supporters
3. [Side By Side](#) – online MIND community where you can listen, share and be heard
4. [Our Infoline](#) – access it to get more information on further mental health support available. Call on 07786 548530, 9-4, from Mon-Fri (except Wednesdays).

