

# Children and Young People's Newsletter



Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster

Happy New Year everyone! We hope that you had a great Christmas break and well deserved rest. Check out what we prepared to help you start this year positively and emotionally healthy.



## New Year's Resolutions

A lot of us tend to make resolutions when entering the new year. We want to be a better version of ourselves often healthier and fitter. Unfortunately, statistics show that only a quarter of those who make resolutions actually stick to them.

There might be many reasons why most of us are unsuccessful in setting new habits. For instance, we might expect results too quickly and end up giving up easily. Our changes might be too drastic and unrealistic or we might not have a good plan of how to reach the goal we set ourselves. On this page you can find a **SMART goals** tool which is a great help when creating realistic goals and planning smaller steps to reach them.

## SMART Goals

SMART goals highlights five elements to creating a good goal and it stands for **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic** and **time-limited**. But what does it really mean?

Firstly, when setting your goal avoid being vague and **specify** what you want to achieve. Secondly, your goal needs to be **measurable**, so that you know when it has been achieved. Measures can be different, depending on what your goal is. Have a look below at the questions to help you think of how to measure your goal. Furthermore, you want to set a goal that is **achievable** meaning that is not too high to start with. You can break your goals to smaller ones here. Additionally, your goal needs to be **realistic** meaning you can actually see yourself achieving it within the time you set for yourself. Again, you might want to consider what's feasible here and break things down. Lastly, **'time-limited'** relates to measure of by when you're planning to achieve your goal.

Try to use SMART goals to rethink or create your New Year's resolutions and hopefully it will help you to stick to them. You can use this tool not only for your New Year's resolutions but for any other goals you might be setting for yourself, whether they're related to your personal life, school or career.

Below you can find useful questions which will help you to create your own SMART goals.

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Specific</b>     | What exactly do I want to achieve? Where? How? When? With whom? What are the conditions and limitations? Why exactly do I want to reach this goal?<br>What are possible alternative ways of achieving the same goal?  |
| <b>Measurable</b>   | How will I know when I have achieved my goal? What will be different?<br>What will I be doing at that time? What will others notice me doing?<br>What will I start or will be doing regularly? What will I stop or will be doing less of?                                   |
| <b>Achievable</b>   | Is it in my power to accomplish it? (If not, consider smaller goals.<br>Don't set yourself up to fail! Celebrate your successes.)   |
| <b>Realistic</b>    | Can I achieve these goals? Is it doable?  |
| <b>Time-limited</b> | Set a reasonable time limit to achieve your goal. 1 week, 1 month, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years?<br>Think about different (smaller) time limits for smaller steps. Consider how pandemic can affect your timeline to make sure you're setting yourself a realistic time limit. |

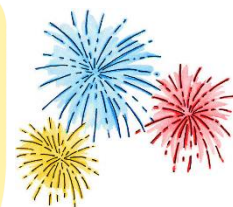
Good luck with your goals this year!



## New Year's expectations

For many of us the start of 2021 wasn't what we have hoped for. England went into third national lockdown due to Covid-19 meaning we all have to stay at home as much as possible and avoid social interactions.

In stressful times like these, we believe it is very important to come back to basics and look after our wellbeing so we can successfully face current challenges and those which might be ahead of us. Below you can find some tips on how to take care of your emotional health:



### Start your day by being present

Mindfulness is a basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing. Practicing mindfulness can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, reduce rumination, improve ability to adapt to stressful situations and improve ability to manage emotions. Try to implement some of these in your day:

- Take notice of how your surroundings change on a daily basis (trees, grass, flowers)
- Think of 3 things you're grateful for
- Have a mindful meal
- Meditate



### Keep moving

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being. World Health Organisation claims that children ought to exercise for 60 minutes a day. Try to implement some physical activity by:

- Going for a walk to your local park
- Organising a family physical activity
- Taking an online exercise class (yoga, aerobics)



### Watch your diet

What we eat can significantly impact on our physical and emotional health. It's important to keep a good diet and hydrate ourselves well even when we're less active due to being in a lockdown.

Eating breakfast gets the day off to a good start as it will provide you with good amount of energy. Instead of eating a large lunch and dinner, have smaller portions spaced out more regularly throughout the day. Try to avoid foods which make your blood sugar rise and fall rapidly, such as sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks as these can affect your mood. Eat lots of vegetables and fruits as they contain a lot of the minerals, vitamins and fibre we need to keep us physically and mentally healthy. Lastly, hydrate yourself. It is recommended to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day (it does not include hot drinks like tea or coffee).



### Look after your sleep

Lack of sleep or bad quality sleep can significantly disrupt our day, affect our mood and lower productivity. Having a good sleep routine is something that can be a powerful step to better physical and emotional health.

Try to wind down before going to bed by having a bath, listening to relaxing music or reading a book. Go to bed at roughly the same time everyday, and try to get up at the same time even on the weekends. Try to avoid caffeine and sugary snacks in the evening and stay away from devices for an hour or two before bed to avoid the harmful artificial light.

We hope the tips mentioned above will help you stay well during the lockdown. You can find out more on how you can look after your mental health during the pandemic on these websites:

- [1. MIND](#)
- [2. Good thinking](#)
- [3. Every mind matters](#)
- [4. Unicef](#)
- [5. Young Minds](#)

Lastly, our **Mental Health Support Team** would like to wish you all the best for the 2021! We are sending lots of smiles and positive energy for you and your family for the upcoming year.

