

Safeguarding Newsletter – Christmas Term

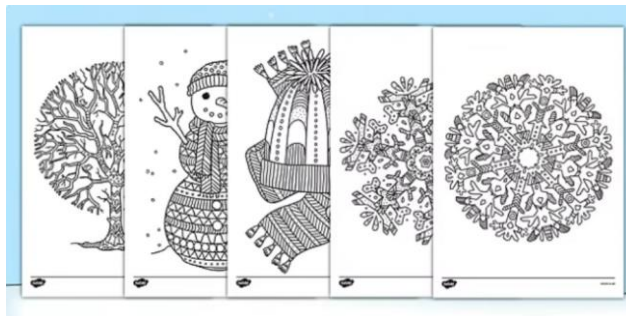
The topic for this newsletter is **Mental health and Wellbeing**. This newsletter aims to provide you as parents and carers, with some advice and guidance on how to keep young people's minds and bodies healthy over the festive period.

Wellbeing activities

Get creative with the family this Christmas! Arts and crafts are great for mindfulness and relaxation.



Here is a link to a tutorial on how to make salt dough decorations.
<https://www.gousto.co.uk/blog/homemade-christmas-decorations>



Here is a link to some mindfulness colouring.
<https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/schools/primary-school/twinkl-christmas-colouring-resources/>

Get your body moving! Exercise is not only good for your body, but also for your mind.



Wrap up warm and go for a walk in the fresh air! Meet up with family or friends and enjoy spending time outside.



Here is a link to a Christmas Dance video for the family to try out.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcpMncuNIQM>

Other activities which may have a positive impact on children and young people are listening to music, playing games, watching films, talking to their friends or family, baking, meditation and self-care.



Get Talking

Approaching the topic of mental health with your child may be daunting for some parents or carers. This poster from 'National Online Safety', discusses tips for initiating these sometimes-difficult conversations with young people.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

Are you sure?

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way. It is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



Sources of Information and Support

Your GP
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/v>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>


Mental health support online and in the community

There are lots of services accessible over the festive period for mental health.
Please find information below.

MENTAL HEALTH DROP-IN SERVICES FOR 11-18 YEAR OLDS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

If you find yourself needing support, we're here to listen and help in your time of need.

Book an appointment by calling the numbers provided or drop in during our opening times.



Monday & Friday 4pm - 8pm the lowdown, 3 Kingswell Street, Northampton, NN1 1PP 01604 638385	Thursday 4pm - 8pm Youth Works, 97 Rockingham Rd, Kettering, NN16 9HX 01536 518339
Tuesday 4pm - 8pm Youth Works at Corby Mind, 18 Argyll St, Corby, NN17 1RU 01536 518339	Saturday 10am - 2pm Service Six, 15 Sassoon Mews Wellingborough NN8 3LT 01933 277520
Wednesday 4pm - 8pm CHAT Youth Counselling, Spouter Youth Building, 30 Market Road, Thrapston, NN14 4JU 01832 274422	Saturday 12pm - 4pm Time 2 Talk, The Abbey, Market Square, Daventry, NN11 4XG 01327 706706



Feeling low?

Anxious?

Struggling to cope?

**Text
SHOUT
to 85258**
for free,
confidential
support, 24/7

"It's alright to
ask for help"

SAMARITANS

116 123

Other websites of note;

Young Minds (Mental health charity for young people)

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Self-Harm UK (Support for young people aged 10-17, who struggle with self-injury)

<https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>

PAPYRUS Hope Line (Suicide prevention advice)

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

Winston's Wish (Bereavement support)

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coping-with-grief-at-christmas/>

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

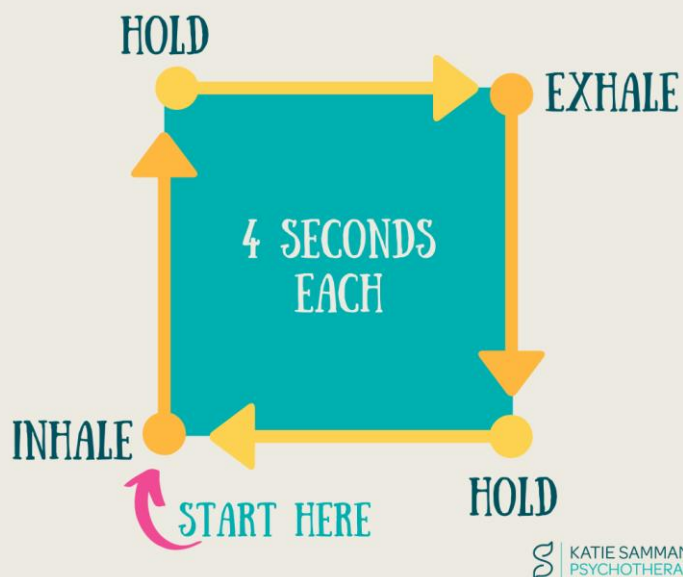


Grounding techniques

For those who struggle with anxiety or overwhelming thoughts and feelings, these grounding techniques may help. Grounding techniques help you to regain a sense of calm, and become more aware of your surroundings.



BOX BREATHING



Butterfly Hug

1. Cross your arms over your chest & make a butterfly shape. Interlock your thumbs.
2. Hands & fingers as vertical as possible, pointing towards the neck.
3. Eyes can be completely or slightly closed. Focus on the tip of your nose.
4. Move your hands like a butterfly gently flapping its wings, tapping yourself. Breathe deeply.
5. Notice what thoughts, images, feelings, physical sensations are going through your mind.

Source: EMDR Foundation
Design by @thiagmusic

Other useful information

The Shack is a non-profit food bank and community help service. It is also a second-hand baby and children shop providing clothes, toys and essentials for families at very low cost. Find the Shack at 10 Lower Street, Kettering.

Kettering Food bank offer food donations to families struggling financially - they are based at 1 Horse Market, Kettering. Call 01536 512838 or 07709 741353 for support.

Use this link to see where children eat cheap/free over the Christmas Break.
<https://moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free>

Odeon Kettering are showing 'Kids Club' Christmas films for £5 a ticket (films depend on the day). See their website below.
<https://www.odeon.co.uk/cinemas/kettering/>



All of us at Kettering Science Academy would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We hope you have a restful break and look forward to welcoming all the children back in 2024

The safeguarding team at Kettering Science Academy

- Mrs Alex Merry - Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal) alexandra.Merry@ketteringscienceacademy.org
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- Miss Chloe Johnson – Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding SSO) chloe.johnson@ketteringscienceacademy.org

If you have an **urgent concern** about a child, call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **0300 126 7000**.