



Safeguarding Newsletter



ADVICE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Mental Health

Mental health **includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being**. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Experiencing a mental health problem is often upsetting, confusing and frightening – particularly at first. People who become unwell, may sometimes feel that it's a sign of weakness. These fears are often reinforced by the negative (and often unrealistic) way that people experiencing mental health problems are shown on TV, in films and by the media. This can often stop people from talking about their struggles, or seeking help. This, in turn, is likely to increase distress and sense of isolation. However, in reality, mental health problems are a common human experience. Most people know someone who has experienced a mental health problem. They can happen to all kinds of people from all walks of life.

Mental Health Lead

Mr Pavitt is our Senior Mental Health Lead, who works alongside the NHS Mental Health Support Team.

We can make MHST referrals alongside you and your child and have a dedicated MHST member working to support our pupils.

MENTAL HEALTH

IS...

- A part of everyone
- Something to look after
- Real and complex
- Really important
- Something you can change

ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- All in your head
- Something you can just snap out of
- Always a negative thing
- Something to be ashamed of



Mental Health in Teens

As parents and carers, it can be hard to know whether your child's feelings and behaviours are a normal part of adolescence or if there is an underlying problem.

We all know that sometimes a rollercoaster of changing emotions can be perfectly normal in teens. However feelings or moods that last for long periods of time, that become the norm or overwhelming and inhibit your child from going about their daily lives, become problematic.

At the heart of positive mental health, lies strong relationships with those around us, and thus it is no secret that talking is a helpful way for young people manage and make sense of their feelings.

Below you will find a directory for advice and guidance, as well as tips for talking to your child if you have concerns around their mental wellbeing. As well as how to ensure social media is not having a negative impact.

Support

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families— www.annafreud.org

YoungMinds Parent Helpline—08088025544

NSPCC—08088005000

MindEd for Families—www.minded.org.uk/families

Young Minds Parent Support— www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/

Place2Be— <https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/supporting-your-child-s-mental-health/>

NHS Mental Health Services—<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>

CAMHS Crisis Team between the hours of 9-5pm—0800 953 0222 (Out of hours 0800 995 1000)



Activities to help get your child talking

- **Take a walk.** Sometimes taking 20 minutes is as simple as taking a walk, whether it's through nearby countryside, to the shops or around the block with the family dog.
- **Go for a drive.** Car journeys are a great opportunity for 20 minutes with your child. Encourage them to leave their phone for a while, turn down the radio and strike up a conversation.
- **Ready, set... bake.** Baking is a great way to have fun together and there are so many bakes to choose from including with [fairy cakes](#), [scones](#), [traybakes](#) or [energy balls](#).
- **Create something together.** There are so many things you can make in 20 minutes. This can be as simple as doing a paint-by-numbers, jigsaw, designing your own Birthday or thank you cards, or trying something new like painting your own T-shirt designs
- **Have a kickabout.** Football, catch, basketball, dodgeball ... there are endless ball games to choose from. You can ask your child to pick a game they'd like to play or ask them about their favourite sports team.
- **Share your music.** You can create playlists together for the different parts of your day – what do you both like to listen to when you wake up, wind down or cook dinner? You may surprise each other with your choices and even introduce each other to something new.
- **Draw or colour-in together.** If your child likes drawing, doing it together can be as easy as doodling on a piece of a paper. Or you could try an adult colouring book together.
- **Yoga time.** Designed around controlled movement and breathing techniques, yoga is an easy one to do together at home. New to yoga? A quick search on YouTube will bring up lots of beginners' videos you can try.

- **Start a new series.** Getting into a gripping series is a great way to spend time together, and you can talk about all the twists and turns through the week!
 - **Share your favourite books.** Have a go at reading each other's favourite books, and then talk about them together. This is a great way to learn more about each other and discover common ground.
 - **Cook together.** Ask your child if there's something they want to learn how to cook, or a dish they'd like to teach you, and make it with them – then enjoy eating what you make together. If you want to heat up the competition, try a family 'Come Dine With Me' where each person takes a turn to cook and entertain the family for an evening, and is given a mark out of ten for their efforts.
 - **Coffee shop date.** Sometimes it's nice to sit back with a cup of something warm and catch up! Whether it's before or between running errands or make a special trip, sitting down and having a drink together could be just what they need to get them talking.
- Have a games night.** You could learn a new board or card game, choose a video game to play, or even try a family poker night.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download your free activity picker template from Young Minds. (You can find instructions on the website).



Conversation Starters

What did you do today that you are most proud of?

If you talk to me about what is worrying you, I can do my best to help

What was the best and worst bit of your day?

What was the biggest problem you had today?

I love you, nothing can ever change that

Is there anything that you need from me? Space, time to talk, time to do something fun...

For some information on conversation starters [CLICK HERE](#)