

The Mental Health Support Team

Covid-19 Newsletter
May 2020

Welcome to our third newsletter! During the lockdown and disruption to schools we wanted to share some resources (see hyperlinks) that parents and carers can do at home when looking after their young people to support their well-being.

We are still open for referrals for 1:1 support via phone/video call. Please make a referral via our website. Referrals can come from teachers, other professionals, parents/carers or young people themselves.

<https://secureforms.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/mhst/>



A lot of the activities and ideas we suggest are based around the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**: <https://bit.ly/wayswellbeing>

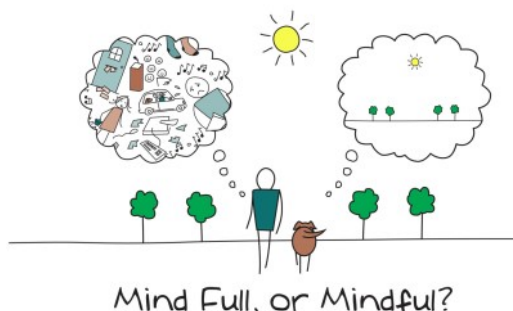
A link to our first **podcast** around how we can use the 5 Ways can be found here: <https://bit.ly/5WaysPod>

Mindfulness! *Being present & engaging fully in each moment.*

Mindful Eating Exercise!

This [exercise](#) is a great way to help you to feel more present, as we can often mindlessly eat food and not appreciate it! Our example is with a sweet, but this can be done with any food such as fruit.

- 1) Look at the sweet closely– notice the shape, colour and pattern.
- 2) Pick it up and notice how it feels– is it heavy or light? Warm or cold? Describe the texture.
- 3) Open the wrapper, noticing the sound this makes. How does your hand feel as you open it?
- 4) Observe the unwrapped sweet like in step 1!
- 5) Place the food on your tongue, without chewing, noticing the flavor and texture– can you describe these?
- 6) How does it feel to eat the sweet? How long did the flavor linger? Is that how you normally eat sweets?



You can find a [mindful colouring sheet](#) at the end of the newsletter.



Self-Soothe Box

A self-soothe box is a fantastic way to manage worries. It can help you to feel more grounded and relaxed in times of stress. [Young Minds](#) talk through how to make a self-soothe box and what is helpful to include, such as stress balls, photographs and scents.



Videos & Resources

- ⇒ [10 Minute Meditation](#) by Calm
- ⇒ [Breathe Bubble](#) by Calm
- ⇒ [Calm Relaxing Music Compilation](#)
- ⇒ [Everyday Mindfulness](#) and how we can practice it



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Creative!

Origami!

This is a great activity that can be done with minimal equipment – the art of paper folding! There are so many different things that can be made, with Youtube having lots of instructional videos to create origami from [Dinosaurs](#) & [Butterflies](#) to [Mice Bookmarks!](#)

You can also [click here](#) for 10 simple origami projects for beginners!



Story Writing & Audiobooks!

Creative writing is a fun way for you to explore your imagination and feelings in a new way! [This website](#) provides a different picture and phrase each day as a story prompt. If you don't see yourself writing something long then you can get some advice about writing [flash fiction](#). Or as a challenge you could find different things from around the home and see if you can include them all in a story!



Amazon [audible](#) has made a selection of their audiobooks free for you to read and find some writing inspiration!

Active!

Exercise is amazing for mental health as it releases chemical endorphins in the brain which are known to improve our mood.



Make your own Bowling Alley!

Arrange filled water bottles like pins at a bowling alley (4 at the back, then 3, 2 and 1 at the front) and use a ball to bowl! You could also decorate each bottle!



You can challenge yourself and others to Improve your score each time. Make it more difficult by blindfolding players or kicking the ball instead!

Home Workout Videos

- ⇒ [5 Minute Yoga/Meditation: Calm Your Anxiety](#)
- ⇒ [15 Minute Dance Cardio Workout](#)

Try out a ['30 Day Family Fitness Challenge'](#) to get everyone involved! Or create your own by designing a 30-day calendar with a different active activity each day!



Yoga Pose



Butterfly

Improves balance and posture whilst calming your mind!

Sit on the floor/cushion. Bring the soles of your feet together & try to sit up as straight as you can. Hold onto your feet with both hands and gently move your knees up and down as if your legs are butterfly wings.

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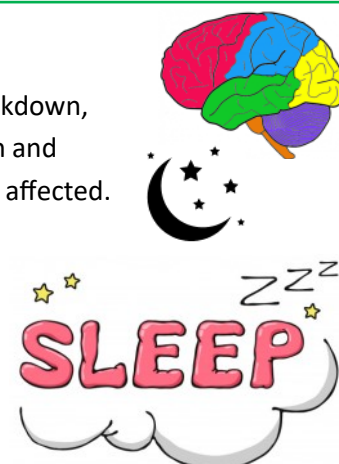
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Science!

Sleep is vital to our health & mental wellbeing— particularly our brains! During lockdown, getting a good amount of sleep can be difficult, not only because it is an uncertain and anxious time for children and adults, but because sleep routines can be adversely affected.

Our [sleep tips](#) page contains more info & ideas on how to promote good sleep.

- ⇒ [The Science of Sleep](#) (SciShow)
- ⇒ [Why Do We Dream](#) (VSauce), [To Sleep, Perchance to Dream](#) (CrashCourse)
- ⇒ [‘Sleep On It’](#) - TEDxYouth talk on the importance of sleep for teens



Fun & Games!

Balloon Pop:

Blow up one balloon for each player who wants to play.

Using a piece of string, tie the balloon to the foot of each player, keeping the string length short.

When the game begins, participants must try to pop the other persons balloons without getting their balloon popped.

The last person left with a balloon is the winner!!



Rainbow Bubble Clouds

Have fun creating a **rainbow bubble cloud**! These are simple to make and the colours can really help to brighten everyone's day!



Outside Links

Parent Survey from Oxford University: Are you a parent of a child or young person in year 0 (reception/ foundation) to year 11? If so please take part in <http://cospaceoxford.com/survey>

Childline: under 19s can call **0800 1111** for free, confidential support

Shout: text 'shout' to **85258** for 24/7 crisis text support

Emerging Minds: <https://bit.ly/EMAnxiety>

Action for Happiness: www.actionforhappiness.org

Self Care Ideas for Children

Supporting Parents who are Worried About Their Children's Well-being during Lockdown [Booklet](#)—Guidance for discussing worries, wellbeing tips etc

CAMHS Oxfordshire: <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/oxon/>

It's a crisis

If it's an emergency, phone 999.
This is if your child's life or the life of another child or young person is at immediate risk.

Call the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Helpline if you need help with a mental health problem. This number replaces 111 for mental health advice in Oxfordshire.

- For children and young people call 01865 904 998

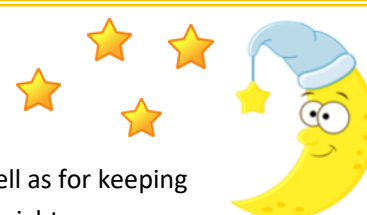
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Top Tips for Better Sleep!



Sleep is vital for us to feel energized, capable and prepared for the day ahead, as well as for keeping our immune system healthy and reducing stress. Sleep is more important than ever right now as [statistics](#) show that 75% of us are finding it harder to fall asleep due to unease around the current situation. Here are some tips for parents or kids to help you get some better sleep!

Try to maintain a routine, if possible – keep normal wake and sleep times to reinforce your body's built-in sleep-wake cycle. Avoid long naps, especially in the afternoon, and limit lie-ins to the weekend. Try to stick to 7-9 hours of sleep for adults, 8-10 for teens and 9-11 for kids. A bedtime routine for kids should begin one hour before intended bedtime and could include: relaxing activities, reading a bedtime story, a warm bath and talking about their day and calming worries. Keeping up a nighttime ritual should influence your body-clock to learn a bedtime and for you to become sleepy in anticipation!

Get some sunlight – getting enough natural sunlight is so important for sleep. Opening all the curtains first thing and opening windows for 20 minutes will help you to get some fresh air and wake up in the morning. Try to spend at least 30 minutes each day in natural sunlight, particularly in the morning, to get a better night's sleep

Look after your body – don't go to bed hungry or stuffed, avoiding heavy meals 2 hours before bed. Nicotine, caffeine and alcohol have all been proven to disrupt sleep so they're worth avoiding also. Physical activity can also really benefit your sleep, and help to reduce stress and anxiety, although avoid exercise too close to bedtime!

Create a restful environment – the best conditions for sleep is a room that is cool, dark and quiet. Or kids might benefit from a warm coloured nightlight. If you're struggling to create a suitable place for sleep then try using earplugs, a sleep mask, aromatherapy or playing relaxation/sleep sounds using a sleep [app](#).

Put your day to bed before you go to bed – blue light from screens has been proven to disrupt sleep so switch them off one hour before bed. Do something that relaxes you to unwind before sleep, you could: dim the lights, have a warm bath, play calming [music](#), read a book, or try some relaxation exercises from our mindfulness section! Avoid potential stressors before bed such as bills, arguments or news. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes then leave your room and do a relaxing activity until you're tired, tossing and turning for longer than this can increase stress and make you less likely to fall asleep!

Distract yourself – this can help to quiet your mind if you're feeling restless. Techniques you can try while in bed include: pick a category (e.g. blue things) and think of all the things you can for it, you can change category, thinking about good things that have happened or things we are grateful for during the past day or week, accept your thoughts instead of fighting them, mouthing a meaningless word like "the" over and over to block out unwanted thoughts.

Quiet your mind – everyone does this differently, so find what works for you. Set your priorities and delegate tasks to others, such as the shopping, cleaning and cooking. You could manage your worries before bed by chatting to a family member about what is on your mind before bed or jotting them down and setting them aside for tomorrow.



More helpful links:

[The Sleep Council](#)

[The Children's Sleep Charity](#)

[Guide to Better Sleep](#)

[Getting a Good Night Sleep for Children](#)

["The Brain Benefits of Deep Sleep and How to Get More of It" Ted Talk](#)



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ACTION CALENDAR: MEANINGFUL MAY 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
"Start Where You Are. Use What You Have. Do What You Can" ~ Arthur Ashe				1 Take a minute to remember what really matters to you and why	2 Do something meaningful for someone you really care about	3 Reconnect with nature today, even if you're stuck indoors
4 Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do	5 Send friends a photo of a time you all enjoyed together	6 Take a step towards one of your life goals, however small	7 Let someone you love know how much they mean to you	8 Set yourself a kindness mission. Give your time to help others	9 Look out for positive news and reasons to be cheerful today	10 Tell someone about why your favourite music means a lot to you
11 What are your most important values? Use them today	12 Be grateful for the little things, even in difficult times	13 Today do something to care for the natural world	14 Show your gratitude to people who are helping to make things better	15 Find out about the values and traditions of another culture	16 Look around you and notice five things you find meaningful	17 Take a positive action to help in your local community
18 Hand-write a note to someone you love and send them a photo of it	19 Find a way to craft what you are doing to give it more meaning	20 Reflect on what makes you feel really valued and appreciated	21 Share photos of 3 things you find meaningful or memorable	22 Ask a loved one or colleague what matters most to them and why	23 Share an inspiring quote with others to give them a boost	24 Do something special today and revisit it in your memory tonight
25 Give your time to help a project or charity you care about	26 Recall three things you've done that you are really proud of	27 Today link your decisions and choices to your purpose in life	28 Tell someone about an event in your life that was really meaningful	29 Think about how your actions make a difference for others	30 Find three good reasons to be hopeful about the future	31 Look up at the sky. Remember we are all part of something bigger

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

31 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind

Questions to ask your child in self-isolation

YOUNGmINDS

What could help you to complete your school work at home? Where would you like to work at home?

Is there anything you want to talk about?

When was the last time you were very happy?

What makes you feel calm?

How can you keep in touch with friends and family at the moment? e.g. Facetime, Whatsapp

What things would you like to do in the future?

What difficulties are you facing now?

What can I do to help?

Where is a place you feel safe?

What are you worried about when you lie in bed and can't sleep?

Would it be helpful if we planned each day together?

Do you have any worries about the coronavirus?

Where in our home do you feel like you can have your own space?

Can you think of anything fun that we can do at home?

How do you feel about things changing?

How do you feel about staying at home?

What have you enjoyed about today?

