

## The Good Mental Health Handbook

A guide for parents and carers



Being the parent/carer of a child who is struggling with their mental health can be utterly heart-breaking and extremely challenging. No one likes to see someone they love in so much pain.

The impact can be far reaching, effecting family dynamics, our ability to work, changing relationships with friends and impacting our own mental and physical wellbeing.

Our worlds can become very small as we focus our time and energy on helping our child, fighting for the right support, and trying to find any strategies or helpful advice we can.

Frustratingly, there is not one answer or solution. Our children and our families are all individual, needing individual approaches and intervention.

The Good Mental Health Handbook has been developed by Hampshire CAMHS and parents/carers. Within its pages it contains information, short videos, and workshops to support our children's mental health challenges.

**\*YOU CAN ACCESS THE ENTIRE HANDBOOK ON OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE\***

The handbook also contains information on parental wellbeing. Remember the airplane analogy: *In an emergency, we are told to put our own mask on first, so that we are able to help others.*

It can feel like yet another 'thing' we must do and finding the time or energy to care for ourselves can feel impossible. However, even learning how to breathe in tricky moments helps to bring control. Managing our own emotional regulation not only helps us to cope but our children also begin to recognise how effective such strategies can be.

The guide gives instant access to information, short videos and workshops. Parents and Carers want strategies, ideas, suggestions, helpful hints, top tips, a guide or anything to try to help their child—a toolkit of information that they can look through when they have the time and energy.

**The Good Mental Health Handbook is that toolkit.**

<https://www.marchwood-jun.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=Support&pid=76>



## MJS Supporting Families ADHD

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects behaviour and includes symptoms of inattentiveness, impulsivity and hyperactivity. An ADHD diagnosis can include a combined presentation of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity, a predominantly inattentive presentation or a predominantly hyperactive-impulsive presentation.

Children and young people go through phases where they are restless and inattentive. These difficulties can be short term and have no long term impact on daily functioning at home and at school. These difficulties are often completely normal and do not necessarily mean the child or young person has ADHD. These difficulties can be managed with consistent parenting approaches, the love and support of parents/carers and good home school communication.

### What you might see or what a child or young person might report

#### Physical Sensations

- Restless and fidgety.
- Struggling to get to sleep at night, having restless sleep or early morning waking.

#### Emotions

- Becoming agitated, oppositional or aggressive towards others when they are struggling with expectations placed on them.

#### Behaviour

- Moving from one activity to another without completing one.
- May not play for long and not enjoy playing with toys and games.
- May prefer active games.
- May struggle to sit still and watch television or a film for any length of time.
- Will often appear not to hear when spoken to.
- They may be constantly fidgety, make lots of noises, and talk all the time (even in situations where it is not appropriate).
- Often doing something that they should not be doing like talking, being disruptive in class.
- Be easily distracted by things going on around them.
- Be impulsive and accident prone.
- Have problems settling for bed and getting to sleep.

#### Cognitions (thoughts)

- Difficulties paying attention and easily distracted and forgetful (starting things but not completing them).
- May seem to be disinterested or daydreaming (glazed over).

#### Systemic

- Family and school functioning may be disrupted and families and schools are required to make significant adjustments to accommodate how the young person is managing or responding. Examples of this include, failing at school or leading to problems in relationships at home to the detriment of development.
- May struggle to make friends.
- May struggle to manage social situations.

If the degree to which a young person struggles with attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity are persisting and may be having a longer term impact on daily functioning at home and at school, you may wish to refer to our SENCO to receive help with their behaviour in the classroom setting. There will be a period of 'watchful waiting' of up to 10 weeks. Parents/carers will also be directed to and need to attend parent training/education programmes.

Specialist help may be required when a child or young person has a significant number of features usually associated with ADHD and their symptoms have been present since childhood and are problematic across all environments such as at home and at school.

## Things to try, support and next steps

- Stay calm (ask for help from someone in the family, take a break, pick your battles and the child will respond better).
- Use pictorial guides or lists to prompt routines and help with organisation.
- Say your child's name and look at them to get their attention when talking to them.
- Only give one instruction at a time (break things down into small steps).
- Get your child to pack their school/college bag the night before school.
- Consider talking to the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) at school.
- Consider parenting classes (your child's school/college should have knowledge of any available in the local area).
- Minimise distractions particularly when trying to work.
- Repeat messages or important information regularly.
- Present information verbally and in writing where possible.
- Role play and practice skills such as turn taking, how to do activities safely (such as crossing the road), and reducing impulsivity/reactivity.
- Change activities regularly to reduce boredom and restlessness.
- Role model and demonstrate that you can do things even when you're anxious.
- Supporting your child to problem solve any obvious triggers.
- Share concerns with your child's school/college and identify whether additional pastoral support is available.
- Depending on the context and the origins of the anxiety being experienced, other services may be helpful (family guidance if there is family breakdown or conflict).
- Make sure that you have a consistent night time routine. Have a set bedtime. Make sure that all screens are off a minimum of one hour before bed time. Visit: [hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/sleep/](https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/sleep/) short link: [bit.ly/3etqTMZ](https://bit.ly/3etqTMZ)
- Seek advice, guidance and support from YoungMinds Parent Helpline: [0808 802 5544](tel:08088025544)

## Strategies and resources to try

A short film on the importance of routine and activity scheduling: [bit.ly/3UxEbbJ](https://bit.ly/3UxEbbJ)



A coping strategy film on how to perform the coping strategy of progressive muscle relaxation: [bit.ly/3fcoINN](https://bit.ly/3fcoINN)



A short film about how people connect, give and receive love and nurture in different ways and approaches: [bit.ly/3xILd3D](https://bit.ly/3xILd3D)



Maslow's hierarchy of needs - a short film to explain the different types and levels of needs we as humans have for healthy growth, development, happiness and functioning and why these are important: [bit.ly/3QXWEuU](https://bit.ly/3QXWEuU)



The Window of Tolerance - a short film to explain a model of emotion regulation how much we can and can't cope with: [bit.ly/3dC5KQn](https://bit.ly/3dC5KQn)



Teenage Turmoil - a workshop for parents to better understand why the teenage years are so challenging: [bit.ly/3Bzt1KD](https://bit.ly/3Bzt1KD)



A workshop on supporting a young person with anxiety: [bit.ly/3EiWc6v](https://bit.ly/3EiWc6v)



A workshop on getting good sleep: [bit.ly/45vAmc9](https://bit.ly/45vAmc9)



A workshop on CARE (coping and resilience education skills): [bit.ly/2NyIRjG](https://bit.ly/2NyIRjG)



A video about supporting a young person with ADHD: [bit.ly/3L63H55](https://bit.ly/3L63H55)



Strategies for behaviour of concern: [bit.ly/43YPahH](https://bit.ly/43YPahH)

