

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 Self Esteem

What it might look like or feel like if a child or young person is struggling with low self-esteem

- Comparing themselves negatively to other people (appearance, academic success, sporting ability etc).
- Being self-critical and struggling to identify or accept personal positive qualities, traits, characteristics or successes.
- Dismissing or discounting positive feedback from others.
- Belief that others do not have genuine positive intentions towards them (they are only speaking to me to get something from me/to be polite/because they have to, not because they genuinely want to).
- Not sharing opinions or preferences. Not believing these are important or equal to others' (can lead to agreement to do things they don't really want to do).
- Making assumptions that acts of injustice are deserved (bad things happened to me because I am a bad person/I deserved it).
- Taking personal responsibility for things beyond their control.
- May experience reluctance to try new things due to anxiety.
- Episodes of low mood.
- May experience difficulties making and maintain friendships.
- May have traits of perfectionism and struggle with making mistakes, real or perceived failure.
- Worry about letting other people down.

Things that might help a child or young person who is experiencing low self-esteem

- Notice, comment, encourage and praise - individuality, personality, characteristics, morals, values, ethics, behaviour, skills, effort, passion, goals, ambition, friendships, hobbies and interests.
- Role model being kind to yourself and prioritising self-care needs.
- Encourage acceptance, kindness and compassion towards others and themselves.
- Let them know they should not be afraid to voice their ideas and opinions. It's ok when people disagree, we all see things differently.
- Role model and normalise making mistakes. Let them know you value effort rather than perfection and encourage them to try new things regardless of the outcome.
- Help children/young people discover and develop their talents, through clubs, groups and activities.
- Help your child understand that skill acquisition takes time so when they say "I can't do it" add in "yet" so it becomes "I can't do it yet".
- There is more information on the Dove Self-Esteem Project website for parents and carers: dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project/help-for-parents.html short link: bit.ly/3yC8qVY
- Share concerns with your child's school/college and identify whether additional pastoral support is available.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/issue/body-image-self-esteem/ short link: bit.ly/3Ey6v7Z
- Seek advice, guidance and support from YoungMinds Parent Helpline: **0808 802 5544**



A workshop on getting good sleep: bit.ly/45vAmc9



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

A short film listing an A-Z of suggested coping strategies to try: bit.ly/31BwUp7



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



A workshop on supporting a young person with anxiety: bit.ly/3EiWc6v



A coping strategy film on how to make your own self-soothe box: bit.ly/2H6uDU1



A workshop on CARE (coping and resilience education skills): bit.ly/2Ny1RjG



A short film on the importance of routine and activity scheduling: bit.ly/3UxEbbJ



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MJS Supporting Families BACK TO BASICS

It is important to have the basics in place when supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing.

The Back to Basics approach can help you to do this. By making simple changes to your child and family routine as well as lifestyle you will begin to see improvements in your child's overall wellbeing.

Be active

We know that being active is vitally important for good mental health. Encourage your child to be active with you. Activity comes in many different forms - whether it is formal exercise such as sport or whether it is informal, such as taking the stairs instead of the lift, walking to school rather than driving, or dancing to music. Physical activity should be fun. You could go for a walk together every day or spend 10 minutes dancing together in the house to music.

Keep learning

Learning new things helps keep their brains active. Set a goal to learn something new with your child/young person; learn an instrument, cook a meal together or learn something important to them. Make it fun. Learning new things increases confidence and self-esteem.

Connect

It is important that children and young people connect with the people around them. Encourage your child to reduce screen time and go out with friends, have a good sleep routine and eat their meals with the family or people they live with. By spending time connecting, your child will begin to feel less isolated and alone.

Take notice

Children and young people can feel overwhelmed with life and its changing demands. It is important that you help your child take time out to ground themselves and take notice of the world around them. Encourage your child to pay attention to the things going on around them. A helpful way to do this is to encourage them to use their five senses by noticing and naming five things they can see, four things they can feel, three things they can hear, two things they can smell and one thing they can taste.

Give

Using our time in a way that benefits others can boost feelings of wellbeing and even improve self confidence. You could help your child experience the benefits of giving by supporting your child to volunteer, join a group, do a good deed for a neighbour, visit a family member and sit with them or give them space to sit with you and talk.

What to do

- Setting goals can be helpful in focusing and working jointly on an agreed goal
- Use the goal setting tool to identify with your child three things you will do together and track their progress
- Once you begin to see changes in your child think about what new goals you will move onto
- Remember to celebrate your successes and not to give up. Change can be challenging and can take time but it will be worth it in the end.
- If you would like to find out more about Back to Basics, please contact your child's school or college or contact your Local Children's Partnership Board via your local Hampshire County Council Family Support Service.



"Back to Basics helped as it reminded me of common sense things I already knew but have forgotten due to a busy life"

"Just making a few changes really helped"

To watch some helpful videos please visit:

bit.ly/3fAkD6Q

