



Kingswinford Academy

A part of Windsor Academy Trust

July 2022 Issue 2 (HT6): Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter:

**"Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."
-- Christopher Robin.**

The school holidays will soon be upon us...time to relax and enjoy some sunshine (if the British weather allows). We all need good mental health and wellbeing - it's essential for happy and healthy living.

For many of us, summer is the season of fun and freedom but if you're living with a mental health issue, you might not be quite so excited at the prospect of the weeks ahead. If so, we've put together some top tips for managing your mental health over the summer holidays.

1. Don't do away with the routine!

Long lie-ins are a must sometimes but if you are sleeping lots of the time, it can have a negative impact on your mental health and wellbeing. It is okay to relax your routine a little, but do attempt to get out of bed at a reasonable time. Have a shower and get ready to face the day.

2. Get planning

If you are struggling to get motivated, planning your time can help. Look at creating a schedule, giving yourself a task or activity to do every morning and afternoon.

3. Practice a summer of self care

Self-care is all about what you can do to help yourself feel better or to keep yourself feeling good. It's a way that we can look after our own mental health and wellbeing. Everyone's approach to self-care will look different. What works for you might not work for others. There are lots of different self-care strategies so you can try out different ones until you find something that works for you.

The plan (below accessed via the link) helps you identify activities that you can use to support your mental health. It's adaptable on a weekly or monthly basis, so that it can fit differing schedules or priorities.

The suggested activities in the plan are split into different categories, including:



- physical activities
- emotional activities
- social activities
- practical activities

The resource was co-written by Anna Freud Centre experts and young people, who shared ideas on self-care strategies that work for them. Click [HERE](#) to view/download a self care plan



Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families have created an additional Self Care Summer Guide. Each week there is an allocated theme and a resource you can access. To view this and to further explore, please click [HERE](#)



Anxiety and panic attacks

Moving forwards, in each Newsletter, there will be information about a wide range of mental health issues. In this newsletter we will briefly look at anxiety and panic attacks. Please be aware that there is lots of information and support available, please speak with the school's pastoral team and/or look at the school's signposting boards.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations. Most people feel anxious at times. It's particularly common to experience some anxiety while coping with stressful events or changes, especially if they could have a big impact on your life.

Anxiety: Talking about mental health [Anxiety | Talking about mental health - Episode 2](#)

Anxiety can be experienced in lots of different ways. If your experiences meet certain criteria your doctor might diagnose you with a specific anxiety disorder. Some commonly diagnosed anxiety disorders are:

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) – this means having regular or uncontrollable worries about many different things in your everyday life.

Social anxiety disorder – this diagnosis means you experience extreme fear or anxiety triggered by social situations (such as everyday situations where you have to talk to another person). It is also known as social phobia.

Panic disorder – this means having regular or frequent panic attacks without a clear cause or trigger. Experiencing panic disorder can mean that you feel constantly afraid of having another panic attack, to the point that this fear itself can trigger your panic attacks.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – this is a diagnosis you may be given if you develop anxiety problems after going through something you found traumatic. PTSD can involve experiencing flashbacks or nightmares.

How can I help myself?

Living with anxiety can be very difficult, but there are steps you can take that might help. This section has some suggestions for you to consider:

Try to manage your worries

Anxiety can make it really hard to stop worrying. You might have worries you can't control. Or you might feel like you need to keep worrying because it feels useful – or that bad things might happen if you stop.

It can be helpful to try different ways of addressing these worries. For example, you could:

- Set aside a specific time to focus on your worries – so you can reassure yourself you haven't forgotten to think about them. Some people find it helps to set a timer.
- Write down your worries and keep them in a particular place – for example, you could write them in a notebook, or on pieces of paper you put in an envelope or jar.

"I try to accept that this is how I feel at the moment, but it won't last forever."

Keep a diary

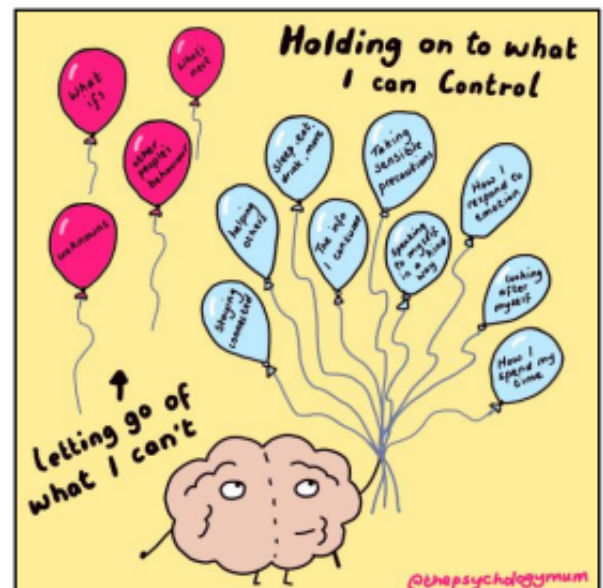
It might help to make a note of what happens when you get anxious or have a panic attack. This could help you spot patterns in what triggers these experiences for you, or notice early signs that they are beginning to happen.

You could also make a note of what's going well. Living with anxiety can mean you think a lot about things that worry you or are hard to do. It's important to be kind to yourself and notice the good things too.

"I keep a photo diary of all the things I've managed to do! Makes me think 'I can do this'. So when I go and sit in a café, or go for a walk, I take a pic, and look back when I feel scared... It encourages me that maybe I can do something again if I've done it before."

Focus on What You Can Control

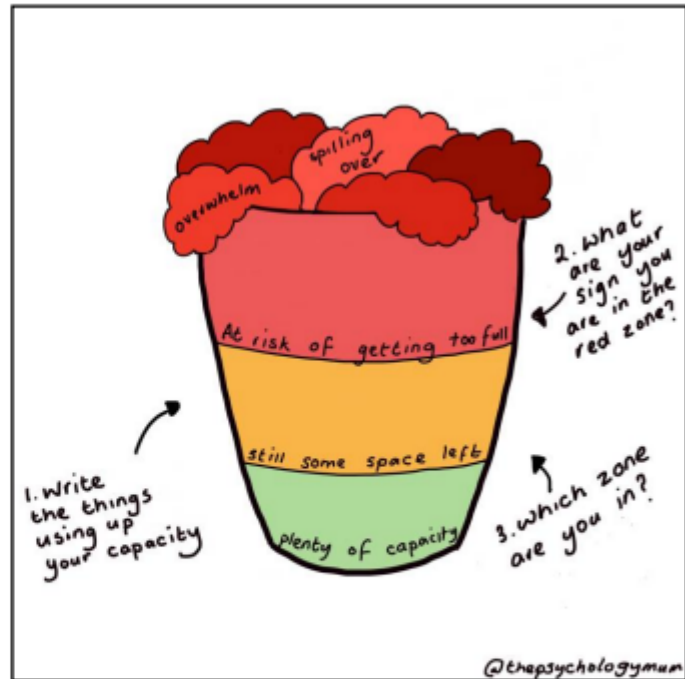
Uncertainty can make things feel out of control. It's important to recognise that there is a lot out of our control at the current time. However, it can be helpful to shift our focus onto what we can control and consider how we can use our limited resources to manage these helpfully. You can use this drawing to think about what you can control, and focus on and direct your resources to these aspects of your life. You can also use this technique with worry. Separate your worries into "worries I can do something about" and "worries that are beyond my control". Shift your focus and resources to identifying how you can tackle and problem solve the first type of worry.



Manage Your Capacity

We all have limited capacity and at times of uncertainty and higher background stress our capacity can be used up quickly, so you reach the point of overwhelm before you notice it. The capacity cup can be used to recognise how full your capacity cup currently is, and what the signs are that you are in the amber or red zone and need to take action before your cup overflows with overwhelm. If you notice you are reaching the top then it is important to take action to manage your capacity. You can do this in a number of ways:

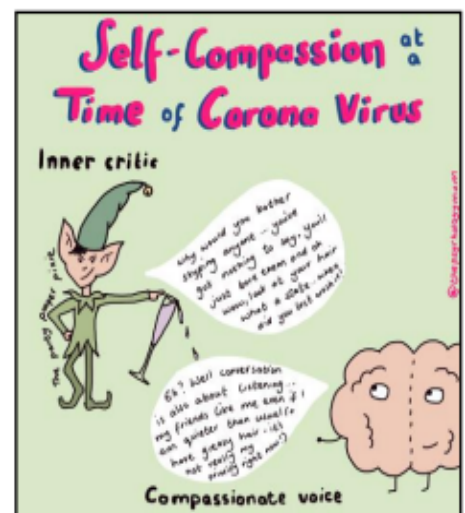
1. Try to work out what is in your cup- is there anything you can throw out or that can wait until another time?
2. Try to problem solve or find solutions to the things in your cup that are causing stress
3. If you don't have very much capacity left, try not to take on too much extra as this will put you in danger of overflowing.
4. Be kind to yourself and try to find ways to relax that will help you reduce stress. If you notice you cup spilling over breathing exercises can be a quick way to manage your capacity in the here and now.

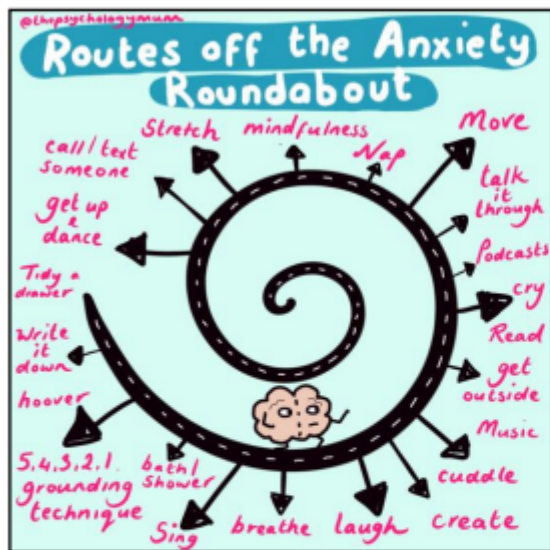


Keep Catastrophising in Check.

Our brains are designed to plan and project into the future and this can be extremely helpful. However at times of high stress and uncertainty this can sometimes become unhelpful. Uncertainty creates a gap in knowledge about what will happen next, which our brains can fill by catastrophising, projecting into the future to predict the worst case scenario.

Keep an eye out for your brain running away with itself and predicting a worst case or negative outcome that seems certain but is actually based on conjecture and is only one possible outcome. Remind yourself of the facts. Stick to reliable sources of information to provide these facts. You can also use the technique above (in the inner critic section) by thinking about what you would say to a friend/ colleague in a similar situation.





Find Ways Off the Anxiety Roundabout

Anxiety is a result of your mind predicting threat (which can be real or perceived) which throws your body into flight/fight/ freeze mode. At the current time there is a greater general level of threat so you may find you are experiencing anxiety symptoms more often. When your brain predicts a threat, it releases chemicals which activate your sympathetic nervous system. This gets your body ready for action so you can respond to the threat. Everybody experiences this differently but some common bodily reactions are racing thoughts, tight muscles, rapid breathing, increased sweating, shakiness and a churning stomach. You might also find yourself getting more irritable or angry, or avoiding people and/or situations- which provides short term relief but long term can be unhelpful.

To get off the anxiety roundabout you need to find ways to calm your body's heightened threat response and engage your parasympathetic nervous system instead, which has a calming effect on your body. There are many ways to do this, and breathing slowly without forcing the breathe is a extremely effective way, as is moving your body. It can be helpful to proactively think of ways that help you get off the anxiety roundabout, so that when you do feel anxious - a symptom of which is your brain has difficulty thinking of what to do next- you have this information to hand. There are some ideas in the image above and you could draw your own anxiety roundabout detailing what helps you de-escalate your threat response when you are feeling anxious.

Recap on events this half a term:

It was **Empathy Day** on the 9th June 2022: Empathy Day is a national event inspiring young people to put empathy into action. Empathy helps us to be the best version of ourselves and acts as a force for social change. Empathy is one of the most important aspects of creating strong relationships, reducing stress, and enhancing emotional awareness. Focus on other people's feelings and perspectives, and put yourselves in someone else's shoes [Empathy Leadership](#). Scientists say that we can train our brain with stories – the more you empathise with characters, the more you understand other people's feelings. Look back on your House Google Classroom, there was a suggested reading list posted!

June was PRIDE Month! Pride Month is an entire month dedicated to the uplifting of LGBTIQ+ VOICES, CELEBRATION of LGBTIQ+ culture and the support of LGBTIQ+ rights. We should all be able to be who we are, and love who we love without fear of discrimination. Mental health problems such as depression, self-harm, alcohol and drug abuse and suicidal thoughts can affect anyone, but they're more common among people who are LGBTIQ+. Being LGBTIQ+ doesn't cause these problems. But some things LGBTIQ+ people go through can affect their mental health, such as discrimination, homophobia or transphobia, social isolation, rejection, and difficult experiences of coming out. It's important to note that embracing being LGBTIQ+ can have a positive impact on someone's wellbeing too. It might mean they have more confidence, a sense of belonging to a community, feelings of relief and self-acceptance, and better relationships with friends and family. Please see below some specific signposting support.

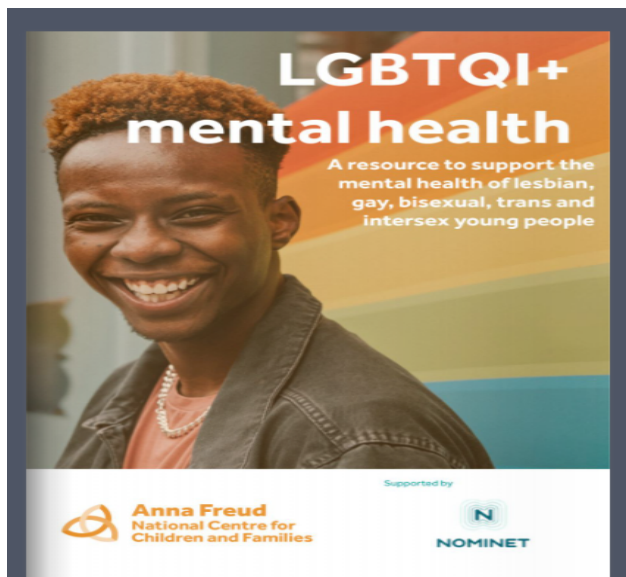


Gendered Intelligence – a trans-led charity that works to increase the quality of trans people's lives, especially those under the age of 25.

Imaan – supports LGBTIQ+ Muslims, and provides an online forum where people can share experiences and ask for help.

Stonewall – offers help and advice for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies.

Switchboard LGBT helpline – offers information and support. All their volunteers are LGBTIQ+.



LGBTQI+ mental health, explores some important topics in relation to being a member of the LGBTQI+ community. It provides advice for LGBTQI+ young people on where to go to get additional support for mental health problems should they arise

Dr Andy Cope and The Wellbeing Award:

The Art of Brilliance Wellbeing Award Workbook launched with our Year 9 students. Our students have been asked to start working through the activities, one such task is for our students to consider what their “best self mode” looks like! We look forward to continuing this Award next academic year!

Parent/Carer Workshops

A number of parents/carers attended workshops in June hosted by the Reflexions Team (MHST), an organisation which offers mental health support in schools. The Reflexions Team provided practical advice on how parents/carers could help to support their child (you!) with low moods and the development of good sleep routines.

Our own School's Wellbeing Garden

Watch this space! We have submitted a successful application, and subsequently we will be receiving items to create a Wellbeing Garden in the school grounds! This will be available to use from September.

National Schizophrenia Awareness Day on 25th July (previous Newsletter said June-error)

This day shines a light on the challenges faced by hundreds of thousands of people living with a diagnosis of schizophrenia in the UK and millions more worldwide. The day sets out the steps we can all take to end the stigma and discrimination surrounding this much - misunderstood illness. Find out more about Schizophrenia at [Young Minds](#). You can also listen to what it is like living with Schizophrenia. Read Anthony's story [HERE](#). Information will be placed on your Google House Classrooms.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Helpful organisations

(links will not work - Taken from QPHS.CO.UK)

Kooth Healthy Young Minds



Kooth is an online mental wellbeing community offering free, safe and anonymous on line chat and emotional wellbeing service for young people aged 11-24 years.

If you need to talk they are online until 10pm everyday.

Young Minds



Young Minds is a charity which focuses on young people's mental health and emotional well-being.

The [website](#) includes downloadable information leaflets on a range of topics, including self-harm, aimed at both young people and adults.

Every Mind Matters

Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more.



There are simple things we can all do to look after our mental health and well-being with expert advice and practical tips, so get in touch today.

Childline



Childline provides support to young people who have concerns about themselves or their friends. The trained listeners will never break confidentiality or judge. They are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Call them on 0800 11 11 or talk to them online at www.childline.org.

Self harm UK



This is a website developed by someone who used to self-harm, providing lots of support and information including access to 'Alumina' - a six week online programme to help you overcome self-harm. You can also self-refer.

Find out more information and get in touch with the team at www.selfharm.co.uk

Beat Eating Disorders



Beat is UK's leading charity that supports anyone affected by eating disorders or difficulties with food, weight or shape.

They have trained support workers who also host anonymous support chat groups online for young people, adults, and those whose friends or loved ones have an eating disorder.

Call them on 08080 801 0677 or talk to them online at www.beat.co.uk

The Mix



The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people. They are there to help you take on any challenge you are facing - from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs.

Talk to them [online](#), on social media or call their free, confidential helpline on 0808 808 4992.

Samaritans



Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. Samaritans are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Call them on 116 123, email the team, or find more info online at www.samaritans.org.

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5PM-MIDNIGHT | FREE | CONFIDENTIAL | ANONYMOUS

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AGAINST
LIVING
MISERABLY
CALM

TEXT 'SHOUT' TO
85258
here for you 24/7

TEXT 'shout' TO
85258

TEXT US NOW



Starting Well Online Chat sessions are available to young people aged 11 to 19, who live or attend school or college within Cheshire West and Chester. The Service offers a friendly supportive experience for young people who may need advice about their physical or emotional health.

PAPYRUS

PREVENTION
OF YOUNG SUICIDE

SPOT THE SIGNS.
FIND OUT HOW TO
TALK OPENLY
ABOUT SUICIDE
SPOT THE SIGNS