

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges

Newsletter 13, February 2021



As we begin term 4, it's amazing to me that we are half-way through the school year. We've seen the seasons changing throughout the lockdown, and winter seems to have lasted a long time, dampening our moods and sapping our energy. Thankfully, signs of spring - however small - are now visible, and bring hope and encouragement for the months ahead. I hope you are keeping warm and well and look forward to working with you this term.

From this:



To this:



In this issue:

- Maintaining wellbeing through hobbies
- MHEW resources for schools/colleges:
 - Chartered College of Teaching - resources
 - Boingboing – videos
 - Anna Freud Centre – toolkits
 - National Children's Bureau – events & news
 - Schools' Wellbeing Partnership – events & news
 - Child Bereavement UK – events & resources
 - Mental Health Foundation & Leaders Unlocked – youth loneliness campaign & resources
- Community MHEW support in East Sussex
- MHEW events for East Sussex school/college MH Leads and MH Link governors
- Self-harm information-sharing protocol has started!
- Schools' & Colleges' MH Network update
- Peer support programmes
- Schools in the spotlight

How doing things we enjoy can help our wellbeing (from [Neuroscience News](#))

The pandemic has taken its toll on many peoples' [mental health](#). Given the fear of the virus and the government restrictions on movement many may understandably be feeling more lonely, anxious, and depressed than usual. The World Health Organization (WHO) has even issued guidance on how people can [look after their mental health](#) during this difficult time. Key advice includes trying to keep a regular pattern of eating, sleeping, hygiene and exercise.

But a less obvious recommendation is to make sure you're still finding time to do the things you enjoy. In fact, research shows that [having a hobby](#) is linked to lower levels of depression – and may even prevent depression for some.

Losing interest and joy in things you normally like doing is one symptom of poor mental health. Known as anhedonia, this is a common symptom of depression and is something patients say they would most like [relief from](#) – possibly because the drugs used to treat depression target other symptoms and don't seem to [alleviate it](#).

For some people, anhedonia is one of the [first symptoms of depression](#), and can even be used to predict the [severity of depression](#) a person might experience.

So, finding time for your interests and pleasures – such as a hobby – during lockdown could be one way of avoiding anhedonia and depression. In fact [social prescribing](#) is a treatment method where doctors can ask patients with mild to moderate depression to take up a non-medical intervention (such as a hobby) to improve their mental health. As antidepressants can be [less effective](#) in those with mild depression, this treatment strategy may still help patients with depression find relief from their symptoms.

So far, some studies have shown that social prescribing programmes that ask patients to take up hobbies such as [gardening](#) or [art](#) are beneficial for mental health and wellbeing.

Evidence also shows that even for those with clinical depression, certain psychological treatments – like behavioural activation, which requires patients to schedule in time to do things that [bring them pleasure and joy](#) – improve symptoms of depression. A [wide range of activities](#) and hobbies may play a role in social prescribing and behavioural activation, such as exercising, playing an instrument, drawing, reading or handicrafts.

Reward System

The reason that finding time for hobbies can work has to do with how they affect the reward system in the brain. When we take part in a hobby that we enjoy, chemical messengers in the brain (known as neurotransmitters) are released – such as dopamine, a chemical which helps us feel pleasure. These feel-good chemicals can then make us want to do the hobby again, and feel more motivated to do so.

So even though we may not feel motivated in the beginning to spend time on a hobby, once we start it and feel the associated pleasure, this will [kick-start our reward system](#) and subsequently our motivation to do it again. This is something we're researching in greater depth [in our lab](#).

Alongside pleasure and motivation, hobbies can also bring other benefits. Physical hobbies can, of course, improve your fitness, and others can even improve your brain function. Research suggests that some hobbies – like [playing a musical instrument](#) – can improve your memory, while artistic hobbies (such as reading or board games puzzles) are reported to [prevent dementia](#) later in life.

So if you're feeling lower than normal during the pandemic, perhaps try to find time to re-engage with some hobbies that you may have enjoyed in the past – or try new ones. You can also seek help or guidance from your GP or a therapist to find the best treatment for you.



January – lockdown
marmalade production

MHEW-related resources for schools/colleges

Covid-related resources for teaching from the [Chartered College of Teaching](#)

[Boingboing video resources](#) produced for Hastings Opportunity Area on the following topics:

1. The first video introduces you to Boingboing's resilience approach
2. Series 1: Four videos linked to Staff wellbeing
3. Series 2: Two videos linked to RSHE Teaching Tips
4. Series 3: Two videos summarising the twilight training sessions on trauma

Anna Freud Centre & Mentally Healthy Schools

[Dealing with the effects of lockdown toolkit](#)

A toolkit focusing on managing the effects of lockdown, including loneliness, boredom, family problems and sleep disturbance.

[Managing anxiety and improving wellbeing toolkit](#)

Mindful crafts, breathing exercises and other self-care ideas, informative videos, emotional expression worksheets and helpful strategies to address anxiety during the pandemic.

[Tools for managing emotions](#)

Tools designed to help children understand and manage their emotions and feelings, and stay calm and in control.

[The anxiety thermometer](#)

Using a feelings thermometer is a great tool to help children recognise what feelings they might be experiencing in any given moment.

[Helping children reframe negative thoughts](#)

This simple activity will show children how to reframe their thinking around a negative situation, and look for positive ways to view the situation.

['Resilience ladder' activity](#)

Developing resilience will help children deal with difficult situations and challenges. This resource teaches children about resilience and the steps they may need to take to achieve their goals.

[Video: Lockdown productivity](#)

A video about how to take care of your mental health, be productive and keep yourself motivated while under lockdown. It is aimed at KS3 but may be suitable with upper KS2, depending on the children you teach.

CPD resources for staff

[HeadStart poster](#)

Find out more about young people's experiences during the coronavirus pandemic with this poster, which also features tips on how to talk to them about their experiences.

[Anna Freud Centre research bulletin](#)

Emerging evidence on the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on children and young people's mental health.

[Wellbeing podcast](#)

Tune in to this podcast where experts talk about the issue of children's wellbeing and how the pandemic is affecting it.

[Mental Health Foundation advice for teachers](#)

This post by the Mental Health Foundation provides advice on how teachers can look after their own mental health when schools resume face-to-face teaching.

[Free learning seminars for schools and FE colleges](#)

The Anna Freud Centre has been holding free seminars based on each of the [5 Steps to Mental Health and Wellbeing framework](#). Catch up on previous 5-steps seminars or secure your free space for final two seminars today.

[Promoting Wellbeing](#) – Thursday 4th March 2021, 4:30-6pm

[Working Together](#) – Thursday 29th April 2021, 4:30-6pm

Mentally Healthy Schools will extend to secondary schools and further education settings soon. Sign up to receive updates and resources [here](#).

Update from the [National Children's Bureau](#)

The pandemic and new lockdown measures have continued to impact the mental health of many young people, with new [NHS data](#) showing children and young people's mental health referrals are at a record high; new research from the [Co-space](#) study highlighting an increase in parental stress and depression; and [The Prince's Trust](#) new report finding that a quarter of young people now feel 'unable to cope with life'. New resources and initiatives to support the mental health of young people, families and school staff continue to be produced to meet this need, including [Place2Be](#) resources for children's mental health week, [Coram Life Education's](#) resources to support at-home learning on wellbeing and resilience, and a range of [webinars, supervision and training opportunities](#).

In January, the Government announced a [major reform](#) of the Mental Health Act which seeks to give individuals greater choice and control over their treatment and reduce restrictive interventions. They are consulting on the proposed changes and the consultation will close on 21st April.

As schools once again prepare for all children and young people to return, it is vital to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community. The Schools' Wellbeing Partnership previously developed a [school return toolkit](#) in consultation with the Department for Education, which may be useful to support schools with planning. The primary and secondary school toolkits help settings work through principles of the whole school approach for the context of school returns, including leadership, curriculum, student voice, staff development and more. The tool includes practice examples, signposts to further resources and offers space for schools to reflect on their own practice, and it can be accessed [here](#).

Several new studies have been published this last week which reveal the impact of the current national lockdown on young people's mental health, including new [findings from the Co-Space study](#); the Mental Health Foundation's new [report and recommendations on loneliness](#); and a new report from Girlguiding on the [impact of the pandemic on girls](#). This week has also been the final week of Anne Longfield's term as [Children's Commissioner](#), and on Wednesday she gave a powerful speech calling for greater ambition and action to support vulnerable children and young people during the pandemic response and beyond, more details on which are below.

Co-Space Study – New findings from study on children's MH during Covid-19

New findings from the ongoing Co-Space study on the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health show that emotional, behavioural and attentional difficulties have increased again during this latest national lockdown. This was particularly the case for primary school aged children. The proportion of secondary school-aged girls reporting emotional problems had also increased and was now at its highest level. Children with SEND and those from low-income households continued to show elevated mental health symptoms throughout the pandemic. To find out more, click [here](#)

Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield Final speech

On Wednesday the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, delivered her final speech as Commissioner in which she called on the Government to do more to prioritise vulnerable children during the pandemic response and beyond, and to aim higher for all children. During her speech, the Commissioner emphasised that "it is impossible to overstate how damaging the last year has been on children," highlighting the 840 million missed days of face-to-face schooling since March 2020, increasing loneliness and anxiety among children, growing child poverty rates and a widening disadvantage gap which means that poorer 7-year-olds are now 7 months before their more affluent peers.

The Commissioner highlighted 'the national scandal' of nearly a fifth of children leaving schools without basic qualifications and the disproportionate impact this has on vulnerable young people. The Commissioner emphasised the need for Government to tackle the devastating impact of child poverty as a prerequisite for addressing education catch-up. The speech also emphasised the importance of breaking down 'silo working' in services and across Government when thinking about children. Finally, the Commissioner explained that *'levelling up is just a slogan unless we are prepared to put children centre stage'* and called for a 'Covid Covenant' that focused on improving opportunities for all children, particularly those most at risk. To find out more or listen back to the speech click [here](#).

Mental Health Foundation – New report ‘Loneliness in young people’

The Mental Health Foundation has published a new report on loneliness in young people which includes a series of policy recommendations for tackling loneliness. They worked with their Mental Health Foundation (MHF) Young Leaders group of 14-25-year olds to understand what loneliness means to young people and how it affects their lives.

The young people spoke about how reduced social relationships led to negative feelings of loneliness and how these could in turn lead to depressive and hopeless thought patterns. Policy recommendations included the need to meet children’s basic needs around poverty, deprivation and disability; improved funding for youth services; school-based interventions to combat loneliness; and a statutory requirement to make mental health and wellbeing a priority in all schools. Read the report [here](#)

Girlguiding – ‘Back in Lockdown’ report shows girls found the third national lockdown difficult

A new report from Girlguiding has shown that girls and young women have found this third national lockdown particularly hard. Many say they feel more sad, lonely, bored and upset during this lockdown compared to the first lockdown in March 2020. Key concerns include the impact of missed opportunities on their future and how the pandemic will affect wider society. However, the research also found that girls were feeling more hopeful due to the vaccine roll-out and were trying to keep well through digital contact. Read the full report [here](#)

New commissioner appointed to oversee education catch up

The Government has recently announced the appointment of Sir Kevan Collins as the government’s Education Recovery Commissioner to oversee a comprehensive programme of educational catch-up for young people who have lost out on learning due to the pandemic. The Government have emphasised that reopening schools is a national priority and that school closures have had a huge impact on children’s learning. Sir Kevan will lead this work and says there will be a focus on children’s mental health in school catch-up plans. Sir Kevan recently emphasised that the response must not just be about adding extra hours of study, but that children's broader needs for play, socialisation, and sport and drama must be considered, explaining that “*these are critical areas which have been missed in their development.*” To find out more, click [here](#)

Fastn - Report with principles of excellence in relationships education

The Family Stability Network (Fastn) have developed a guide and set of twelve principles to help settings recognise and deliver excellent relationships education. The guide was developed by a group of leading relationships organisations and is based on official government requirements and research in this area. High quality relationships education is so important because healthy and reliable relationships are key to children having happy, healthy lives and being mentally well.

Principles include that educators feel supported, knowledgeable and confident to deliver relationships education; pupils have opportunities to understand healthy relationships through experiencing them; and parents and staff role model positive relationships and honest communication. The full Principles cover areas of Ofsted requirements and DfE guidance and are a useful tool for schools to develop their relationships education. The document can be found [here](#).

In addition, Fastn are looking for feedback and input from organisations with a variety of

expertise and would like to extend this to Schools' Wellbeing Partnership members. If you would like to share your thoughts, please contact them at info@fastn.org

Evidence Based Practice Unit - Emerging Evidence on Coronavirus and young people's mental health

The Evidence Base Practice Unit's 'Emerging evidence' series continues to explore the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health in its sixth issue this week. This issue looks at the pandemic's impact on children with pre-existing health and education needs who appear to be experiencing elevated mental health challenges. The report also examines new evidence of other groups of children and young people whose mental health has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, which includes children and young people of colour, children from low income households, children in care and LGBTQ+ children and young people. To read the full bulletin, click [here](#).

University of Manchester – Research project on school wellbeing is recruiting schools and pupils

A team led by researchers at The University of Manchester are looking for pupils to take part in a research project that aims to understand what children and young people want school-based wellbeing support to look like. The project was commissioned by the National Institute of Health Care Excellence (NICE) to inform their recommendations for schools on social, emotional and mental health provision in schools. The research team are hoping to speak with pupils in a range of educational settings, including mainstream primary and secondary, further education, and alternative provision settings. See more information [here](#).

Anna Freud Centre – New survey shows majority of nursery staff work with children from extremely complex backgrounds

A new survey by the Anna Freud Centre has revealed that a high proportion of nursery workers work with children facing extremely complex backgrounds and challenging emotional and behavioural needs. 69% of nursery staff reported working with babies or children affected by trauma or abuse, 71% said they worked with babies or children affected by domestic violence and 91% said they had dealt with challenging situations involving children who had mental health issues or social or emotional difficulties. Other challenges identified included parental substance abuse, bereavement and the effects of the pandemic. According to the survey, many nursery staff feel under-prepared for this side of the job, found these needs difficult to manage and wanted more access to training. Read the full report [here](#)

Enjoying uplifting winter walks – feeling grateful to live in such a beautiful area:



Updates from the [Schools' Wellbeing Partnership](#)



Coram Life Education – Free resources to support children’s resilience and wellbeing

Coram Life Education has published a range of resources and activities, which have been made free for primary school activities to share with parents who are supporting their children’s education at home. The SCARF at home activities help children learn valuable life skills, focusing on the ways children can keep themselves healthy and safe. Older children learn about assertiveness, recognising the influence of friends and how to think critically about the decisions they make and managing risks safely. To find out more, click [here](#).



Foundation Years – Resources on putting wellbeing at the heart of early years practice

As the Department for Education’s early years stakeholder engagement partner, the National Children’s Bureau recently hosted five free *Learn – Explore – Debate* events focused on putting wellbeing at the heart of early years practice. The events brought early years practitioners, local authorities, consultants and academics together with officials from the Department for Education and Ofsted to discuss practical ways to support the wellbeing of children and staff. The recordings, slides and case studies from the event are now available on the Foundation Years website [here](#).



Free conference on youth mental health and Covid-19

Emerging Minds, the Policy Institute and the Centre for Society and Mental Health are organising a free conference on youth mental health and Covid-19. Free online conference from Emerging Minds on Youth mental health and Covid-19. The conference will examine the evidence of how children and young people’s mental health has changed due to Covid-19 and explore the likely impacts in the short, medium and long term. The conference will be held between 1st - 3rd March. Click [here](#) for further information



Edupod and Innovating Minds – Free mental health webinars

Edupod and Innovating Minds continue to hold a free webinar series to help professionals implement a whole school approach to mental health. Webinars cover a range of topics, including a session on strategies to support staff mental health in schools which will be held on 23rd February. Click [here](#) to see more.



Anna Freud – Poster on Staff Wellbeing

The Anna Freud Centre have published a poster with ten tips to support school staff wellbeing. To access the poster, click [here](#).



The Sleep Charity – Teen Sleep Hub live chat available

Every Tuesday and Thursday from 6-8pm, the Sleep Charity offer a Teen Sleep Hub with a live chat open for teenagers and families to talk to Sleep Practitioners about sleep issues. [See more here](#).



Anna Freud Centre - Free webinar on managing challenging behaviour in early years settings.

The Anna Freud Centre is offering a series of free webinars for nursery and other early years workers. The first webinar will look at 'Managing challenging behaviour in early years settings' and will take place on Wednesday 24th Feb from 4.30 – 6pm. The webinar will look at how to understand and manage emotions such as anger, aggression and frustration in young children. [See more here](#).



Conference on youth mental health and covid-19

Emerging Minds, the Policy Institute and the Centre for Society and Mental Health are organising a free conference on what we know and what we should do about youth mental health during Covid-19, which will explore how the wider societal consequences of Covid-19 will affect children and young people's mental health. The conference will be held from 1st – 3rd March. [See more here](#)

Child Bereavement UK

Read on for details of a new three hour interactive webinar – **Bereavement by Suicide: Supporting Children & Young People**.

There are two dates listed at the moment – 24th February (2-5pm) and 18th March (2-5pm). If they sell out, you can put your name on the waiting list on Eventbrite which means if there is a cancellation, you will be notified. Click here for more details:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bereavement-by-suicide-supporting-children-young-people-3-hour-webinar-registration-140824663359>.

They have also added some dates for other webinars which have previously sold out. For a list of all the webinars on offer currently please go [here](#).

Loneliness and Isolation

Loneliness and isolation are prevalent themes for people of all ages during the pandemic. [The Mental Health Foundation](#) and [Leaders Unlocked](#) have collaborated on the '[Unlock Loneliness](#)' campaign, which includes a series of videos made with young people to explain the impact of these issues on them. You could start with the initial short clip '[What's up with everyone](#)' and explore '[15 tips if you're feeling lonely](#)' with adolescents.

Helpful resources for young people:

- **British Red Cross:** [Free mental health and wellbeing tools to reduce loneliness for young people.](#)
- **Young Minds:** [Things you can do to stop feelings lonely](#)
- **Let's Talk Loneliness:** [Toolkit, resources, and support](#)
- **Every Mind Matters:** [what you can do if you feel lonely during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Helplines

- **The Mix:** 0808 808 4994 (UK). They also have a [crisis messenger service](#).
- **Young Minds: Crisis messenger.** Text YM to 85258 (UK).
- **Samaritans:** Call 24/7 for free on 116 123 (UK).

Community MHEW support in East Sussex

If you are looking to signpost your wider school/college communities to health and wellbeing support, please see the following links for organisations/projects available to East Sussex residents, with thanks to Catherine Lulham from [Southdown's People in Partnership](#) programme:

- ❖ [Diversity Resource International](#) are inviting you to share your experiences, ask questions and suggest ideas for improvement at their next *Race Inequality in Sussex* Webinar: '**An Anti-Racist Approach to Education**', **Thursday 25th February (6–8pm, via Zoom)**. To find out more, please [book here](#).
- ❖ The *NHS* have **COVID Vaccination information in different languages** which may be of use: '[Vaccine information in community languages](#)'. [NIHR: ARCKSS](#) have also co-produced leaflets for our community [here](#).
- ❖ Dr. Emma Hepburn has used her skills and experience to create this **free e-book: 'How to stay calm in a Global Pandemic'**: http://bit.ly/in_partnershipPADLET
- ❖ **Grassroots Fund for Recovery** - a community grant funding pot for grassroots groups to support people with substance misuse issues (with the opportunity for a double grant of up to £10,000 if the project also supports people with mental health difficulties/ dual diagnosis). [Applications open 5th March](#). For further information, please contact: Community Development Officer - Victoria.Walters@eastsussex.gov.uk / 07925 145 625; or Strategic Commissioner for Substance Misuse, Caz.Kearton-Evans@eastsussex.gov.uk / 07526 251 588
- ❖ [Healthwatch East Sussex](#) have launched a survey to capture the experiences of people who have been vaccinated, and to better understand the views of those who are yet to receive their vaccination. Responses to the survey will help us learn whether the vaccination process is meeting the needs of recipients and to identify how it could be improved for others. [Survey closes midnight, 31st March 2021](#). [To access the survey, please click here](#).
- ❖ [The Hastings Community Network \(HCN\)](#) is holding an **online Open Mic event** for you to hear about the [Hastings Borough Council consultation](#) and progress on the Town Deal, get an update and feedback on HCN Events and have your say about issues affecting your work or projects you would like to profile. This will take place on [Friday the 26th March \(1.30 – 3.30pm via Zoom\)](#). [To book your place, please click here](#).

- ❖ **East Sussex Libraries** are supporting people who have no/ limited access to online services. Apply for IT equipment loaned from East Sussex Libraries here: <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/adult-learning/tablet-loan-libraries-form>. The Good Things Foundation are also gifting IT equipment (please note- there is limited supply); apply here. <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/adult-learning/tablet-loan-connected-libraries-form>. People receiving government support may also be entitled to cheaper phone / broadband through the [BT Basic deal](#).
- ❖ In partnership with HARC (Hastings Advice & Representation Centre), [Energise Sussex Coast](#) are now able to provide energy and welfare telephone advice to residents across East Sussex. [To apply, please click here.](#)
- ❖ **Holiday Activities and Food Programme in East Sussex** - East Sussex County Council now inviting Expressions of Interests from potential providers of holiday activities (and/ or food), for the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays 2021. [Submissions for the Easter holidays](#) – [Deadline, 5th March 2021](#). [Submissions for the Summer / Christmas holidays](#) – [Deadline, Friday 23rd March 2021](#).
- ❖ [Arts on Prescription](#) provides creative activities and confidence building workshops designed to enhance mental health and wellbeing, and to promote social engagement. Please contact info@artsonprescription.org
- ❖ The NHS are providing free exercise class videos in collaboration with fitness experts. Anyone can access these. [Please click here.](#)
- ❖ [SCDA](#) are offering **bereavement counselling for people across East Sussex**. The online group takes place on the final Tuesday of each month via *Zoom* (6-7pm). They also have a face-to-face group due to restart soon in Bexhill (*YouNique Wellbeing Studios, 11 Windmill Drive TN39 4DG*), this runs the second Wednesday of each month (2:30-3.45pm). SCDA understand that here is no time limit on grief and are therefore able to support those recently bereaved as well as those who have been living with the loss for many years. Please contact Kellie Leyton (Bereaved by Suicide Outreach Worker) - Kellie.Leyton@sussexcommunity.org.uk / 07542 305 419 / 01273 519108 (for counselling referrals).
- ❖ The [Scottish Drugs Forum](#) have produced a glossary of contested terms for substance misuse. Many thanks to [ADFAM](#) for sharing this resource.
- ❖ Teen Talk – Young Carers Counselling in East Sussex for 12 – 18 year olds facilitated by Care for the Carers (via phone). To find out more please visit www.cftc.org.uk / 01323 738 390 / info@cftc.org.uk
- ❖ [Young Carers Together](#) – new physical and mental wellbeing support service from Care for the Carers for young carers aged 5 to 17 years. There is also a Young Adult Carers (YACs) service for carers aged 16 to 25 years. Activities include:
 - Information and signposting
 - Supporting young carers to access services and activities
 - Holiday activities
 - Young Carers Club for those aged 8 and upwards (starting in April 2021)

- ❖ The [Mental Health Foundation](#) have released their findings from their ongoing research into the impact of the pandemic on young people aged 13- 19. [Please click here to find out more.](#)
- ❖ [East Sussex Community Hubs](#) are here to help people affected by the pandemic who have no one else to turn to. If you're not sure where to start, the hubs can help signpost you to local options.
 - Wealden: 01323 443322
 - Eastbourne: 01323 679722
 - Hastings: 01424 451019
 - Rother: 01424 787000 (option 4)
 - Lewes: 01273 099956
- ❖ People from ethnic minority background who are affected by Covid-19 and would like to access bilingual or outreach support can receive help from [Diversity Resource International](#): Call 07775 332 866 / Email: community@driorg.com
- ❖ Mental health issues are common and treatable. The sooner you seek help, the better. For support and information please visit the [East Sussex Mental Health Directory](#) or call the *Sussex Mental Health Line* on 0800 0309 500 (free phone). Call 116 123 to speak to the [Samaritans](#).
- ❖ [i-Rock](#) offers advice and support on emotional and mental wellbeing, jobs, education and housing to 14-25 year olds. As their physical bases are currently closed, support is available virtually to all young people throughout East Sussex.
- ❖ [Young Minds](#) offers helpful information and advice on youth MHEW. They also have a *Parents Helpline* on 0808 802 5544 (Monday – Friday 9.30am- 4pm).
- ❖ Support for Carers can be found [here](#). Alternatively, call [Care for the Carers](#) on 01323 738 390, or email: info@cftc.org.uk
- ❖ The [East Sussex Community Information Service](#) is a great resource for finding out about local support, groups, clubs and societies.
- ❖ Open for Parents can provide advice and information for parents/carers. Visit: <https://www.openforparents.org.uk/> / Call 01424 725 800 / Email info@openforparents.org. Additionally, the [Anna Freud National Centre for Children & Families](#) provides information and advice to parents and carers. You can also find NSPCC advice for parents and carers [here](#).
- ❖ [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) provide confidential support and information to bereaved people of all ages, free of charge. Visit their [website](#) or call their helpline on 0808 808 1677
- ❖ Men's Mental Health Awareness Padlet has information and advice: <https://padlet.com/peopleinpartnership/LetsTalkMensMentalHealth>
- ❖ Please see guidance for [SEND \(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities\) provision](#) for children throughout Lockdown.

ES MHEW training, supervision and events - dates for your diary

Virtual group supervision for MH Leads in educational settings

Sessions are for up to 6 staff, and run from 3.30-5.00pm on the following dates:

Tues 23/2 – bring any MH-related issues for discussion

Tues 23/3

Thurs 29/4

Tues 25/5

Thurs 24/6

Tues 20/7

Pls. book your place via [ISEND Intervention and Support](#)

School and College MH Leads' programme

A new, rolling programme of 1-hour webinars from January-July 2021 plus follow up 1-hour discussion meetings to support MH Leads in their role and embedding a whole school approach. The sessions will be useful to experienced or new MH Leads. Further information on [czone](#) and booking via ES [Learning Portal](#).

The first session on 4 February covered the main expectations of the MH Lead role in schools/colleges, and some considerations re the themes of leadership and management and ethos and environment. All sessions are being recorded separately for viewing in your own time via Czone, and we will share the links to these as soon as possible.

Attendees commented as follows:

'Thank you for a really great session... so helpful and though provoking'.

'Thank you, lots of useful information'.

'Many thanks for all this information. Feel a little overwhelmed as new to role but great to be able to share best practice'.

Here are the details, please note we have added an extra webinar on 6th May:

All 9.30-10.30am as follows:

1. Thursday 4 March 2021 – staff development and wellbeing
2. Thursday 22 April 2021 - assessing need & monitoring impact; targeted support
3. Thursday 6 May 2021 - student voice; working with parents
4. Thursday 17 June 2021 - curriculum, teaching and development

[Discussion groups to review progress and share challenges and successes with colleagues.](#)

[All sessions 15:45-16:45:](#)

1. Monday 1 March 2021
2. Tuesday 30 March 2021
3. Tuesday 18 May 2021
4. Tuesday 6 July 2021

MH Link Governors' Programme

Details of training and networking sessions on [czone](#). Please note that we have scheduled another date for small schools' networking on Monday 15th March, from 6.00-7.30pm.

All sessions are available to book via ES [Learning Portal](#). Search MH governors. Additional supporting documents are being uploaded to czone [here](#) – please check back soon.

Here are some comments from governors about recent MH training and networking sessions:
'As a new governor and new MHEW link this has been a very helpful overview with so many resources.'

'It's been so helpful and will sign up to other courses. Thank you.'

'Thank you so much. It was really good to meet up with everybody and discuss complex issues.'

Self-harm training

As a prelude to the pan-Sussex self-harm programme of work, the three Sussex local authorities have commissioned [Dr. Pooky Knightsmith](#) to provide the following training sessions for school/college staff and local practitioners:

1. The initial session on Monday 1st February – What to say and do if a child is self-harming – was attended by over 350 people.
A recording of this event and associated resources are now available on [czone](#), alongside the self-harm section of the [ES Schools' MH Guide](#).
2. **Thursday 25th February** - Working with parents and carers to support a child who is self-harming
3. **Thursday 11th March** – Tolerating distress: Simple Skills for Managing Crisis Moments

All from 4-5.30pm, free of charge. Pls. book via ES [Learning Portal](#), search events MHEW111 and 112.

Self-harm information sharing between health partners and schools

As of 1st February a new protocol is being piloted in East Sussex for informing schools/colleges when children and young people have attended A&E due to self-harm. This will work along similar lines to Operation Encompass, and is a partnership project between Health partners, ES Safeguarding Partnership and ESCC. It is hoped that the sharing of information and care plans will facilitate more openness in discussing mental health and coping behaviours, and enable enhanced support for children and young people in school/college.

Please see full details on [czone](#).

The Schools' & Colleges Mental Health Network

The above group will continue to meet termly, via MS Teams until further notice. This is an opportunity for Education, Health and Social Care professionals to come together and share best practice in relation to mental health for children, young people and their families, in the aim of building stronger relationships and understanding across local networks. Guest speakers present on relevant topics and services.

Meetings take place termly on Wednesdays from 3.30-5pm.

Next meeting - on 17th March, content tbc.

Content for the remainder of the school year to be confirmed shortly. Please see information on [czone](#) and [register your interest](#) if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Peer support programmes

Term 3's SCMH Network meeting focused on Peer Support Programmes. We heard from Greta Anderson about the Village to Raise a Child Programme ([VRAC](#)), working with cyp aged 11-18 in Hailsham and Newhaven:

- To reduce the number of vulnerable young people in Hailsham and Newhaven, who are at risk of exclusion.
- To create guidance and policy recommendations to allow policy makers to implement an integrates approach that jointly improves the wellbeing of young people and their school attainment.

VRAC's work includes Mentoring, Peer-to-Peer support and Trauma practice. Local organisation Priority 1-54 is a delivery partner. John Khan also attended to talk about their peer support programme 'Smooth Moves to Secondary School' (SM2SS) – for primary-secondary transition. This programme is also available to schools outside of the VRAC project area – see details [here](#).

Priority 1-54 are running 3 seminars on SM2SS:

- Monday 29th March (9:30- 12:00pm): <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/138729621031>
- Tuesday 30th March (12:30-15:00pm): <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/138915089773>
- Wednesday 31st March (14:30-17:00pm): <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/138916084749>

These free 'bite-sized' seminars will provide an overview of evidence-based strategies to help children move successfully from primary to secondary school. Plus an outline of the Smooth Moves to Secondary School transition project and peer-to-peer programme to support the emotional wellbeing and resilience of children during their first year of secondary school.

Please contact John Khan at: john.khan@priority154.com.

The Anna Freud Centre TriSpace pilot programme

This programme for secondary schools includes peer support training, and wellbeing support for staff as well as parents and carers. Interested schools would need to sign up ASAP for one or more of the programme elements – the peer support online training starts in term 6 with follow up in September.

Programme pointers:

- 3 x ½ days for around 10 yp in years 10-11
- Virtual training for yp to support younger/more vulnerable students (developing skills in making sense of behaviours, help-seeking, and trusting relationships in order to affect change)
- Students participating must be ok in themselves, reasonably confident and mature, and comfortable to engage in group online as cameras will be on
- A member of school staff must be able to 'own' the programme in school and engage in all sessions. They must have time to 'champion' it in school
- Consent required from parents/carers
- There would be a pre-programme virtual meet up and a follow up
- Programme would start in summer term so follow up would be in September

For further details, pls. contact judy.perraton@eastsussex.gov.uk, or AFC direct: Lesley.French@annafreud.org.

General guidance on setting up a peer support programme

1. Work from where the young people are at; be creative in how you engage young people
2. Involve the right people; think carefully about mentor and mentee recruitment
3. Focus on the relationships; build trust to create space for change
4. Encourage young people's ownership
5. Be safe and boundaried; ensure that mentors are adequately supervised

AMBIT

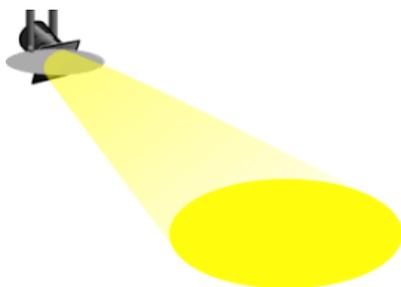
AMBIT, or Adolescent Mentalisation Based Integrative Treatment, is a framework for practice that was designed to promote 'help seeking' and generate trusting relationships in order to affect change. 'Mentalising' is a mental activity that occurs when we are trying to make sense of behaviour, either our own or others. The extent to which we develop the skill of mentalizing is related to our early attachment experiences. Our ability to mentalize in any given moment is impacted by the level of emotional arousal we might be experiencing. When emotions are high, mentalizing is compromised. AMBIT is a set of principles and tools designed to promote mentalizing.



East Sussex MHEW Conference for Schools and Colleges 2021

This year's event will be virtual again and will offer a range of interactive webinars over 3 consecutive days, from Wednesday 30th June to Friday 2nd July inclusive. Plans are underway for stimulating and practical content to help staff in a range of roles to support MHEW work.

We will share details as soon as possible.



Schools in the spotlight

Local examples of peer support programmes, and adaptations during the pandemic

With thanks to Susan Thompson, Julie Mortimer, Lori Skinner and Paula Peters, all of whom are happy to be contacted to share their experience.

1. Ditchling Primary School

Pre-covid programmes:

- Y6 buddies
- Yr 5 Peer Mediators in high viz jackets use card with question prompts
- Yr 5 Play Leaders in red Play Leader T-shirts support play activities for younger children. Training previously delivered by local secondary school PE dept. This year they will be trained by PE leader if possible
- Yr 5 - nursery buddies

This year:

All children have undertaken Peer Mediator training. Older children in each bubble are expected to support younger children. Class teachers support as required within bubbles.

Training principles:

- Restorative Justice/Peer Mediation
- Coaching questions in classroom displays help children to support each other without giving the answer using coaching tools.
- Pupil voice has shown they are using Restorative Justice across the school

Contact: Susan Thompson, Head Teacher

Email: sthompson@ditchling-ce-prim.e-sussex.sch.uk

2. Wallands Primary School, Lewes

Pre-covid programmes:

- Yr 4 pupils primarily support cyp in KS1
- Yr 6 pupils support KS2
- Includes training on boundaries and confidentiality.

This year:

Adapted to “Bubble Buddies” and on duty during play times.

Training principles:

Based on NSPCC recommendations. How to approach children to ask if they would like help and not be offended if they say no. Options can include game suggestions if lonely or group approach to diffuse a low level argument. Staff intervene if arguments escalate or become physical.

Contact: Julie Mortimer, SENCO & MH Lead

Email: jmortimer@wallandscp.e-sussex.sch.uk

3. Langney Primary School, Eastbourne

Pre-covid programmes:

Yrs 2 to 6 Wellbeing Warriors support classmates in each classroom's Wellbeing Area, asking if they would like support, help, to talk, or even to be left alone, offering ideas to help calm, e.g. colouring books, fidget toys, stress toys..

This year:

- Plan to train Year 1 child from each class after settling in period
- Involving WW's in creating activities for their year groups, recording an assembly re-launch of the WW's

Training principles:

- Initial training from [Albion in the Community](#)
- Listening, offering support and kindness, rather than seeking to solve problems that are causing 'big emotions'. Exploring what mental health means (age-appropriately) and providing examples of how to support others with strategies to improve and maintain their mental health, e.g. Following the '5 ways to wellbeing'.

Contact: Lori Skinner, Yr 1 teacher and MH Lead

Email: lori.skinner@swale.at

4. Kings Academy, Ringmer

Pre-covid programmes:

- Yr 10s trained in Restorative Justice approach via Priority 1-54 to mentor students in yrs 7-9 (conflict resolution, active listening, etc.)
- Mentors are assigned up to 3 mentees and have weekly check-ins, mainly during tutor time, dealing with friendships, low level worries, etc.
- Weekly meeting with staff lead to discuss new cases and any issues arising

This year:

- Student Wellbeing Ambassador Programme with SWAP, for 14-18s
- Up to 35 students across all year groups complete 6 weeks' online training
- They will learn about, try out recommendations, track progress via apps, and teach about wellbeing, plus lead wellbeing campaigns across the school
- Staff lead can log in to monitor course progress

Training principles:

Developed by psychology teacher Aidan Harvey-Craig, this programme teaches the psychology of wellbeing, cognitive and self-management skills

Contact: Paula Peters, Student Leadership, MH Lead

Email: paula.peters@kingsacademies.uk

Congratulations to all of these schools for their achievements, especially during the pandemic.

Peer support programmes develop skills and confidence in those trained to be mentors, listeners, buddies, mediators, etc. as well as modelling positive relationship and conflict resolution techniques. Plus they can empower children and young people to problem-solve without automatically seeking input from the adults around them, thereby also alleviating staff workload!

As always, I find solace in nature and in connecting with friends, family and colleagues. We have all found innovative ways to keep in touch, and taking up an 'open mic' challenge at joyed a zoom New Year's Eve party was one of my recent highlights!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments in relation to this newsletter's content, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Judy

ESCC Schools' & Colleges' MHEW Adviser

07850 882219

Judy.perraton@eastsussex.gov.uk

