

Coping with Uncertainty



Newsletter January 2021

The Mental Health Support Team in SEN Schools (MHST)

Email: hct.mhst@nhs.net







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The MHST is an early intervention service, working with **mild to moderate** mental health difficulties and challenging behaviours. This is part of a national programme to offer early interventions in school settings. Please talk to your child’s teacher or school link worker if you think you and/or your child would benefit from individual or group intervention with the MHST. The MHST is currently offering **virtual support** due to covid-19 therefore you will need access to a computer or smartphone.

The MHST supports mental wellbeing in the following SEN schools in Herts and West Essex:
The Collett, Colnbrook, Garston Manor, Middleton, Southfield, The Valley, Woolgrove, Oakview, and Wells Park. We are only able to offer support to staff, students, parents/ carers of children who attend schools that have signed up to support from the MHST for SEN schools.

Any member of staff at an MHST school can contact us for advice and support around the mental wellbeing of young people and staff.

The MHST has **recently expanded** and we are very pleased to welcome the new members to our team.

<p>Charlotte Cameron EMHP Oakview School Middleton School Wells Park School</p>		<p>Ella Mcinroy-Naylor EMHP The Collett School Colnbrook School</p>	
<p>Megan Mchugh EMHP Southfield School The Valley School</p>		<p>Ruth Odunewu EMHP Woolgrove School Garston Manor School</p>	
<p>Alice Lynch Senior Positive Behaviour Analyst <i>Currently on maternity leave</i></p>		<p>Beth Copping Assistant Psychologist</p>	

Sue Jackson Senior Administrator 	Ellen Mackey Clinical Psychologist MHST Clinical Lead 
Nicky Morris Senior Mental Health Practitioner 	Lizzie Mitchell Senior Mental Health Practitioner 
Sarah Garvey MHST Team Leader 	

Coping with Uncertainty

As human beings we have a tendency to like things to be predictable as this helps us cope better and reduce feelings of anxiety. Therefore, the unpredictability and uncertainty with Covid-19 can leave us feeling out of control, panicked, and worried, making it difficult to gain a sense of safety and calmness. However, there are things we can do to help us and those around us cope with the uncertainty.

- When there is a lot of uncertainty around us and we cannot plan the way we normally do; it can be useful to reframe uncertainty by remaining in the present moment. This can be supported by building in regular mindfulness exercises into the day to help children feel grounded and reduce feelings of anxiety.
- Create family routines, this helps build a sense of safety and predictability, and reduces anxiety.
- Allocate time to talk, listen, and validate how children are feeling. This can be through reading a story, play, toys, drawing, writing, or visuals.
- There are some things you can control and others you cannot. Covid-19 highlights that there many things we cannot control. Instead of focusing on what you do not have control over, support children to focus on what is in our control.

YouTube channels / videos for guided mindfulness:

- Cosmic Kids Channel – mindfulness and meditation for children
- Muscle relaxation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaTDNYjk-Gw>
- Relaxed breathing - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLbK0o9Bk7Q>
- Belly Breathing Song - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c646TZ_E18A
- Breathing & Stretching - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyvuaL_2avY
- Body scan - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIC-lo441v4>

When we need to stay at home it can be hard to know what to do with our time. Here are some suggestions of activities you could try.

Daily Living Activities	Exercise and Outdoors	Games and Puzzles	Social Interaction	Creative and Sensory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Laundry ○ Hoovering ○ Washing up ○ Making tea/coffee ○ Cooking/baking ○ Writing a shopping list/setting the table ○ Organising: books into colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dancing ○ Stretching/yoga ○ Ball games: football, tennis ○ Obstacle course ○ Jumping jacks ○ Bean bag games ○ Gardening/planting seeds ○ Birdwatching ○ Walking ○ Fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treasure hunts ○ Word games ○ Board games ○ Card games ○ Games on the iPad ○ Puzzles/jigsaws ○ Games console ○ Family talent show ○ Create a time capsule ○ Den building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phone calls ○ Reading together ○ Video calls ○ Writing letters ○ Watching TV together ○ Baking together ○ Talking about what went well ○ Painting together ○ Join virtual communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Colouring/painting ○ Reading ○ Homemade playdough ○ Cornflour slime ○ Sensory bottles ○ Jelly play

Additional Resources:

- **BBC bring the noise** has music, dance and sign for primary school aged children
- **Online learning for special education** and the home of accessible software. Enabling children of all abilities to play, develop and achieve.
- **Stephen Hawking primary school** has some useful resources for parents
- **The sensory project** has lots of accessible activities, including cause and effect activities.
- **The singing walrus** has lots of educational songs for kids
- **Disney 10 Minute Shakeups** are 10-minute activities based on Disney films
- **Super Movers help children** move while they learn whilst supporting curriculum subjects, including maths and English.

7 Minute Animal Workout

Set an interval timer and complete each animal movement for 45 seconds, with 15 seconds of rest in between. Do as many as you can!

 **FROG JUMPS**
Hop, hop, back and forth like a frog

 **BEAR WALK**
Hands & feet on the floor, hips high - walk left and right

 **GORILLA SHUFFLE**
Sink into a low sumo squat, with hands on the floor, shuffle around the room.

 **STARFISH JUMPS**
Jumping jacks as fast as you can, with arms and legs spread wide.

 **CHEETAH RUN**
Run in place, as FAST as you can! Just like the fastest animal in the Sahara.

 **CRAB CRAWL**
Sit and place your palms flat on the floor behind you near your hips. Lift up off the ground and crawl.

 **ELEPHANT STOMPS**
March in place lifting your knees as high as you can and stomping the ground as hard as you can!

RAISING AN EXTRAORDINARY PERSON
[HTTPS://HES-EXTRAORDINARY.COM](https://hes-extraordinary.com)

EXPRESS YOURSELF: Celebrating Children’s Mental Health Week

1st-7th February 2021

We have also included a couple of resources that you might find helpful to share with your students in mental health week in February to run with the theme for 2021 of expressing yourself.

- 1) **Place to Be powerpoint primary assembly** is succinct and visual and it can be tailored to the needs of the children accessing; it explores different ways that children express themselves, encourages them to think about how they might express themselves and what this feels like.

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/childrens-mental-health-week-2021-primary-assembly-and-guide/>

- 2) **Exploring Feelings Activities** – Mentally Health Schools – Resource ideas for your students to complete in classes during mental health week and it also suggests some adaptations for younger children and specialist schools.

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/activities-for-exploring-feelings/>

For any schools interested in a Talking about mental health assembly developed by the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families, please get in touch as we still have some availability to deliver this for you in mental health week or later on in the term. We can talk to you about adapting the content to suit the needs of the children in your specific school.

Upcoming Events

1 February 2021 11am-12pm

The MHST are hosting a virtual coffee morning for parents/carers. Please do come along to find out what we do, and support us with learning how we can support the whole school community. This is also an opportunity to meet other families and build relationships.

Calling parents/carers – ‘Co-Production Opportunity’:



What is co-production?

When parents/carers get involved in decision making and share their feedback and ideas on our service to ensure that we meet the needs of families.

How to get involved:

We are looking for parents to be part of a discussion to give us some feedback on our services, and help us improve and shape the services we provide for children, young people and their families in the future. If you would like to be involved please get in contact via telephone or email and let us know how you would prefer to provide us feedback (email, telephone or video call).

MHST Schools

The Collett | Colnbrook | Garston Manor | Middleton | Southfield | The Valley
Woolgrove | Oak View | Wells Park

Virtual Coffee Morning for Parents / Carers



1st February 2021 11-12pm

Dear Parents / Carers,

The Mental Health Support Team in SEN Schools (MHST) kindly invites you to join us for a virtual coffee morning.

This is an opportunity to meet the team at the MHST and ask any questions about our service. This will be a great way for you to find out more about the mental health support available at your child's school, alongside letting us know what support you would like from us.

Sign Up to the Coffee Morning

If you are interested in attending, please email the following details to: hct.mhst@nhs.net

- Your name (parent/carer), your child's school
- Preferred email address to be contacted by

A link to the Microsoft teams Video Call will be emailed to you

MHST in SEN schools

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in Special Educational Needs (SEN) Schools in Herts and West Essex support young people's mental health and wellbeing through early intervention work with parents and young people, and supporting schools to implement a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

We are accepting parent/carers direct referrals to the MHST for Spring term 2021 (4th January – 26th March)

Are you concerned about your child's mental wellbeing and/or challenging behaviour?

Our team would be happy to talk to you about your concerns and advise on the best ways to support your child's needs.

If appropriate, they can offer 6-8 sessions of child and/or parent/carers support over video or phone calls. We are **only working via phone and video** for the foreseeable future.

The MHST is an early intervention service, so sometimes we might not be the best team to support you and your child. We can help signpost you to the most appropriate team for the needs.

The MHST usually takes referrals from school staff, but during this time you can refer to us directly. By making a referral you consent to the MHST sharing this request for support with your child's school.

Making a referral

If you would like to refer your child, please email us on hct.mhst@nhs.net.

Please include the following information:

Name of child/ young person:

Date of birth:

School:

Brief summary of your concerns:

Contact number:

Preferred time for a call-back:

By emailing us to self-refer, please understand that we will open your child's electronic patient record to document our interactions and better understand previous and current support.

A member of our team will aim to email or call you back within 3-5 working days to discuss your concerns in more detail.

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