

Mental Health and Well-Being Bulletin—for parents

May 2020



**GEORGE
SALTER
ACADEMY**

Topic: How to support your child's mental health and well-being

Welcome to the GSA Mental Health and Well-being bulletin!

This guide is for parents and carers to offer support in understanding how to encourage our young people to look after and manage their own mental health every day.

What is mental health and well-being?

We all have mental health, just like we have physical health. Mental health is our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. So, being mentally healthy means we feel good about ourselves, we're able to manage our emotions, and make sustainable positive relationships.

Why are teenagers so 'moody'?

Puberty causes hormonal imbalances in the brain which effects the way teenagers think and act.

Teenagers become more emotional, untidy, disorganised and irrational.

So, there is a scientific reason as to why there are plates festering under your son/daughter's bed, or they seem so angry or they just can't get up in the morning!

This is why it's important we work together in supporting young people with managing their own mental health.



How to support your teenager's mental health and well-being:

The 5 steps to well-being is a great way to encourage your child to manage their own mental health and is a great framework for you as parents and carers to monitor how your child is coping with their mental health.

Step 1: Connect—encourage your child to spend time with the family and stay connected to friends on a daily basis! Teenagers can struggle with this due to the imbalance of hormones they experience during puberty. They tend to cope with this by isolating themselves.

Top tip: Find an activity they are interested in and take part in that with them, even if it is eating snacks and watching TV. Any amount of time connecting with others on a daily basis helps boost their emotions. Having alone time is important, however too much isolation can lead to low mood.

Step 2: Be active—encourage your child to take part in some form of physical activity on a daily basis, whether that be playing football in the garden or going for a walk. During quarantine we are limited on the amount of physical activity we can get involved in, but there are some fantastic online work outs that the whole family can get involved in!

Fact: Physical activity releases 'feel good' hormones in the brain. Taking part in physical activity in the mornings (or in some teenagers' cases late afternoon) helps manage wellbeing throughout the day.

Step 3: Take notice—encourage your child to be present in the 'now' through practicing Mindfulness. Our minds can focus on the 'what ifs' - (when we worry about what will happen next and in some cases make negative predictions) or the 'remember when's' (fixating on negative experiences from the past). Mindfulness encourages our mind to focus on the now and take notice of the present. It is also really important for us as teachers and you as parents and carers to take notice of any changes in mood or behaviour and talk to our young people to support them through this.

Step 4: Keep Learning—encourage your child to keep learning new skills and knowledge. Learning something new boosts self-esteem. Social-distancing gives us a fantastic opportunity to do this, whether it be learning how to cook a favourite dish, bake a cake, how to play chess or even learning about your own family history.

Top tip: Take interest in the new skill or knowledge your child has taken an interest in—even if it is a interest that is completely opposite to your own!

Step 5: Give—encourage your child to empathise with others and give back through acts of kindness, whether this be something small like helping a sibling with homework or washing up (actually... this would be a big act of kindness for most teens). Or a charitable act of kindness, getting involved with fundraising or local charity drives.

Top tip: Get involved with the GSA Kindness calendar

Mental Health Awareness Week

The Mental Health Foundation have changed their theme this year from raising awareness on 'Sleep' to 'Kindness' in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Kindness links to the 5th step to well-being; *giving back to others*. There are so many positive acts of kindness within the UK in supporting the NHS, key workers and vulnerable members of our communities. The GSA website has more information on how to get involved in Mental Health Awareness Week.

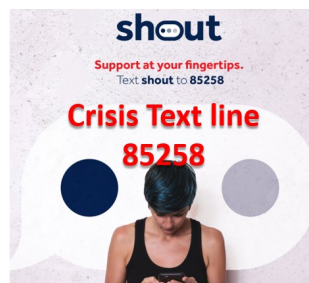


During this week we are asking the GSA family to reflect on how we can be kinder to ourselves and to others.

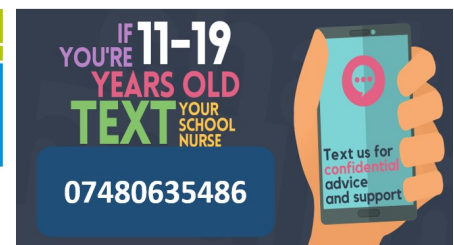
Where can we seek support?

If you are worried about your child's well-being and feel they need someone to talk to, these agencies below are all still available during quarantine:

Support and guidance for young people 11-19



<https://www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk/self-help-toolbox/>



Useful sites and apps

There are some fantastic apps that support young people and adults with managing their mental health. The following apps have been assessed by the **NHS**:



Calm Harm

Reduce urges to self-harm and manage emotions in a more positive way

Free



WorryTree

Notice, record and manage your worries using cognitive behavioural therapy techniques.

Free



Catch It

Learn to manage negative thoughts and look at problems differently

Free



Chill Panda

Being tested in the NHS

Use breathing techniques to help you relax more, worry less and feel better

Free

Well-being quote of the month ~ May
“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless”
~ Mother Teresa