

Southampton MHST

Newsletter – Secondary

September 2022



Welcome to our September 2022 MHST newsletter!

We hope you had a great break over the summer holidays and were able to enjoy that time in the way you wanted to, whether that was with friends, family, hobbies or just relaxing.

In this edition we'll be looking at our mood, in particular low mood. All of us experience low moods sometimes so we'll be trying to understand more about these as well as the mental health condition depression and what makes it different.

We also know that low mood and depression can lead to us thinking more critically about ourselves and the world, so we'll be trying to understand when those thoughts can be unhelpful how we can challenge ourselves to try more helpful alternatives.



We are the Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST). We provide targeted support for anxiety, low mood and/or behavioural difficulties. In Secondary Schools we primarily provide 1:1 support with young people using evidenced-based interventions based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). If you feel you (or your child or pupil) would benefit from support from our service, you can speak to your school who will discuss with you and send a referral into our service.

Contact us:

If you have any questions or queries for the
Southampton MHST

Tel: 0300 1236689

Email: SouthamptonMHST@Solent.nhs.uk

Understanding Low Mood



Low mood is the experience of sadness, which happens to us all at times and is a completely normal part of life. Feeling low does not always mean that there is something wrong.



Low mood is common after upsetting or difficult things have happened but can also arrive for no obvious reason.



You might feel uncomfortable things like being more tired, having less energy or motivation, having more negative thoughts, or feeling more angry or frustrated. Your sleep or appetite can also be affected.



Low mood usually passes after a couple of days or weeks, but sometimes it can feel like we've got stuck and this can start to have a bigger impact on our lives and how much we are enjoying things.



What is depression and how is it different?

Depression is different to feeling low - whilst everyone feels low sometimes, not everyone will experience depression. Depression is a recognised, diagnosable mental health condition.

If someone has been feeling low for a long time, their feelings have become very frequent, and it is having a big impact on how they live their life then they might be experiencing depression.



Depression is one of the most common mental health conditions, affecting roughly 1 in 6 adults in the UK



Females are about twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression as males



Rates of depression increased following the COVID-19 pandemic

Below are some of the common symptoms used to identify depression by mental health professionals. It is important to remember though that any diagnosis would consider other things going on as well. There can be lots of other reasons for experiencing these symptoms, including physical health problems and the life events happening around us.

Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day.

Much less interest or pleasure in most activities most of the day.

Significant weight loss or weight gain or changed appetite most days.

A slowing down of thought and a reduction of physical movement

Tiredness or loss of energy nearly every day.

Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day.

Reduced ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day.

Happiness Quiz

Questions:

- 1) Happiness is a 'normal' and expected emotion for human beings to exist in. ✓ ✗
- 2) To be happy means to feel good. ✓ ✗
- 3) If you are not happy, there is something wrong with you. ✓ ✗

Answers:

- 1) Happiness is a 'normal' and expected emotion for human beings to exist in.**

FALSE

The belief that we should all be 'happy' all the time is one that can cause distress, especially when external influences (such as social media) paint a picture that everyone else is happy 100% of the time (which is definitely NOT true!).

In reality, experiencing a wide range of both comfortable and uncomfortable emotions is much more 'normal' (think of emotions like the weather – constantly shifting and changing). How can we expect to be happy all of the time when a lot of things are out of our control (e.g. catching a cold, exams, a heatwave, lack of sleep...)?

- 2) To be happy means to feel good.**

FALSE

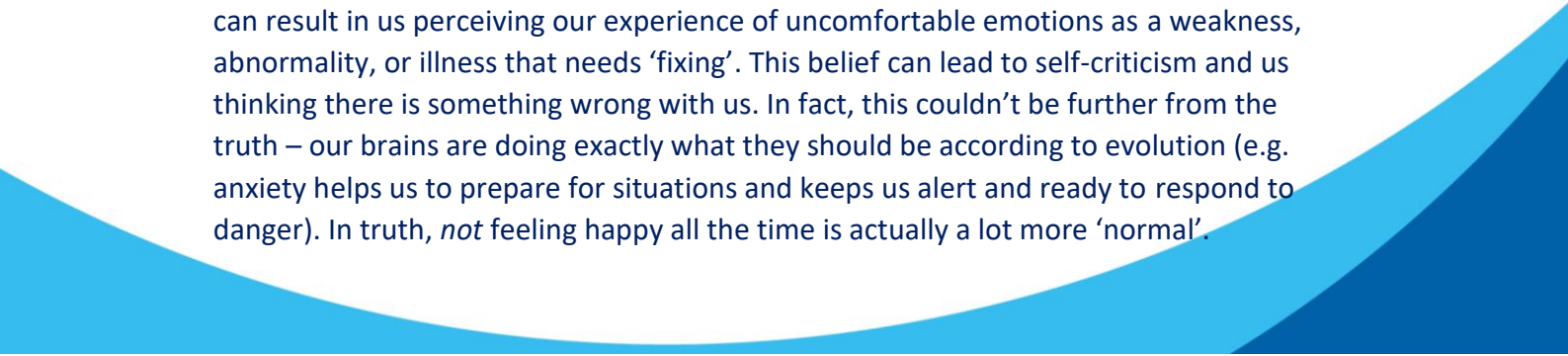
Realistically, how long does happiness last for before uncomfortable emotions begin to creep in? Think of a time when you have felt *really* happy...how long was it before you experienced a feeling of upset, confusion, frustration, stress or anxiety?

Rather than thinking that to be happy we must *feel* good, we can think of happiness as relating to the way we live our lives. Living a life with meaning and full of things that are important to us, whilst being able to experience a full range of emotions is more likely to reflect true happiness.

- 3) If you are not happy, there is something wrong with you.**

FALSE

Believing we should be happy always and that happiness is a state of feeling good can result in us perceiving our experience of uncomfortable emotions as a weakness, abnormality, or illness that needs 'fixing'. This belief can lead to self-criticism and us thinking there is something wrong with us. In fact, this couldn't be further from the truth – our brains are doing exactly what they should be according to evolution (e.g. anxiety helps us to prepare for situations and keeps us alert and ready to respond to danger). In truth, *not* feeling happy all the time is actually a lot more 'normal'.



So, what does 'happiness' actually mean?

As human beings, we have developed different ways of thinking about 'happiness' and what it means to us. This has been influenced by many things including evolution, individual experiences and the changing World around us. These ideas about happiness can sometimes make us feel more unhappy if we believe them strongly, struggle to consider other ideas or lead our lives according to them. Challenging our beliefs about happiness can be helpful in looking at things through a more realistic 'lens' and prevent us from putting too much pressure on ourselves to meet unrealistic expectations.



To learn more about 'The Happiness Trap' watch the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv6HkipQcfA>

Unhelpful thinking styles

We all have thoughts that come into our mind without us choosing sometimes, whether positive or negative or just random. But when we're feeling low it is common to have more negative thoughts and to find it harder to ignore or challenge them.

Although this is normal, it can become a problem if they start to make us feel bad lots of the time or if they make it harder for us to do the things we want to do. If we notice ourselves feeling stuck in these unhelpful 'thinking traps', there are things we can try and do to help ourselves.



We all fall into the trap of using unhelpful thinking styles every now and then and these can develop gradually over time until we find ourselves using them regularly, often without realising! This can make us feel 'stuck' on a problem or negative thought/trail of thoughts and unable to break free from them, which may feel distressing and lower our mood.



Do you often expect the worst to happen in a situation without any evidence to support this? Do you sometimes assume what others are thinking without actually knowing? Have you ever blamed yourself for a situation that may not have been completely your fault or responsibility? – these are just some examples of the thinking traps we often use.



If we can recognise when we are getting caught in these thinking traps, we can start to challenge our thoughts, thinking in a more helpful way about situations which can support us in feeling a little less 'stuck'.

Using the examples on the next page below, why not try asking yourself some of these questions next time you notice an unhelping thinking style influencing your thoughts?

Unhelpful thinking styles continued...



Useful services and websites for parents and young people

Please see the details of the following services that may also be able to offer you and your child advice and support. Please note that during this unprecedented time services have had to change the way they work and offer support, so please contact the service directly to find out what is currently on offer.

THE SOLENT WEST CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (CAMHS):

If your child is currently receiving a service from CAMHS, a duty line for advice in the event of deterioration in your child / young person's mental health is available. Please request to speak to the duty worker on 0300 123 6661. You are also able to contact the Behaviour Helpline for advice and strategies with managing challenging behaviour on 0300 123 6661, your contact details will be taken and a Behaviour Advisor will return your call within 1 week.

Please be aware that in the current situation there may be a slight delay in responding to duty calls

The Public Health Nursing (PHN) Service offers support to children, young people and their families who live in Southampton. The team is made up of Nurses, Emotional Health and Wellbeing workers and PHN Assistants; who can offer support for a wide range of health issues such as growth concerns, support with long term conditions, sleep problems, continence issues, general anxiety and much more. They have a confidential text messaging service called Solent Pulse where you can text any health questions and have them answered by a nurse. They are currently offering support through telephone calls, emails, text messages and video calling to comply with social distancing rules. If you would like to contact PHN for support please use one of the methods below:

Phone: 0300 123 6661 Solent Pulse: 07491 163278

Website: <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/solent/school-nursing>

Email: snhs.publichealthnursingsouthampton@nhs.net

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Southampton Multi-Agency Support Hub: 02380 833336

(Safeguarding advice & parenting support).

Samaritans: Free phone 116 123

Parentline (24-hour advice): 0808 800 2222

Child line: 0800 1111

NHS direct: 111 – non emergency helpline

SANE mental health help line (every day 16.30-22.30) 0300 304 7000

Young Minds help line (Mon-Fri 9.30-4pm) 0808 802 5544

USEFUL WEBSITES – UNDERSTANDING SYMPTOMS, ADVICE AND SELF-HELP:

- <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/> - This covers numerous 'symptoms' of developmental disorders and mental health conditions. It also has a lot of helpful advice ranging from 'online safety' to 'getting children to eat greens'. Mixture of articles and short videos.
- www.youngminds.org.uk – information and advice for young people, parents and professionals, includes a telephone advice line and videos. This website covers emotional health, mental health conditions and neurodevelopmental disorders e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- http://www.sane.org.uk/resources/mental_health_conditions/ - information and advice, includes resources and useful leaflets to manage symptoms of many mental health symptoms. It also has online forums and a telephone advice line (above).
- www.getselfhelp.co.uk – this website is an invaluable resource containing free downloadable activities and videos for you to support your child to manage their emotional and mental health.
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/> - Similar to 'getselfhelp'.
- Selected mobile phone 'apps' to help manage symptoms can be viewed here, although please consider age appropriateness: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-health-apps.aspx> (Or type 'Apps for Mental Health – NHS Choices into an internet search engine.)

Useful services continued

NO LIMITS ADVICE PROJECT <https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/> Contact Phone: 02380 224 224 – 13 The High Street, Southampton, SO17 1XN Email: enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk

Please contact the service via telephone, email or 'drop-in' to the advice centre.

The No Limits service offer advice and support to young people under the age of 26 years on many issues, including: housing, employment, money management advice, social support, symptoms of mental health, counselling for emotional ill-health, sexual health guidance, drug and alcohol support, victims and perpetrators of crime, plus much more.

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL PARENTING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

<http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/results.action?familychannel=8-7-1>

Please access this website to view a range of parenting support courses in Southampton. Or go into Southampton City Council's website and type 'families' into the search bar.

Please also contact the Southampton City Council MASH Team on the telephone number above for further advice around services and parenting support.

RE:MINDS

A parent-led support group for families of children with autism or mental health issues.

<https://www.reminds.org.uk/> With a closed Facebook group of over 600 members -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/reminds>

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Buzz Network - a group for Southampton parents/carers of children with disabilities/special needs. It is open to children with any disability from ADHD to visual impairments, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. <http://sid.southampton.gov.uk> – type 'Buzz Network' into the search engine for contact details.

CHILDREN WITH SUSPECTED AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/>

Autism Hampshire: Information, Advice, 'Needs Assessment' and support. Community Access, Southampton Office –1648 Parkway, Whiteley, PO15 7AH, Tel: 02380 766162 Email:

communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- <http://www.theredlipstickfoundation.org/> The Red Lipstick Foundation are here to offer services to families in Hampshire who have been bereaved by suicide or immediate family members following a person's sudden death.

- <http://www.simonsays.org.uk/> Tel: 08453 055 744 - Bereavement service for Children.

- <http://www.cruse.org.uk/?gclid=CMmGptiMktMCFYWRGwoduC0Ejw> National Bereavement Service.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICES

- <https://www.hamptontrust.org.uk/our-programmes/> support projects for those who have perpetrated domestic abuse, and, adults and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

- <https://www.yellowdoor.org.uk/> Telephone: 023 8063 6313 - support project for adults and young people who have experienced physical and or sexual abuse.