

# Southampton MHST

## Newsletter – Secondary

October 2021

**Welcome to the October issue of our newsletter!**

Dear Parents, Carers, Children and Young People,

We hope that you've all had a positive start to this new school year and are settling in well. However, we recognise that starting a new school year (or even a new school) can bring challenges.

In this issue we're looking at ways of practicing self-care. Even when you're busy it's important to take time out to look after yourself. We hope you see something here you would like to try.



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 your child or pupil would benefit from support from our service, you can speak to 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](mailto:SouthamptonMHST@Solent.nhs.uk)

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# Self-care introduction

Self-care is important for everyone, but arguably even more so as a parent/carer. We have to be organised, be attentive, play taxi driver, chef and housekeeper, as well as be ready to answer our little people's "whys" whenever they develop a new curiosity!

Stress can impact us in many ways, some of which you may not be aware of. Stress can impact our ability to concentrate, sleep or make decisions. But it can also affect many other things such as our digestion, conditions such as asthma and eczema, and even our dental health.



When we feel stressed, we can often feel anxious, or lower in mood. And the longer we feel stress for, the harder it can be for our body to recover.

The good news is, there are some simple ways to lower our stress levels. They can be done anywhere, and don't cost a penny. You can share them with your whole family, too!

On the next page are some simple breathing exercises that you can try which will relax your mind and body and lower your body's stress response. In turn, you should feel more able to be present in everyday life, feel happier and healthier, and enjoy the other things you may do for self-care including the suggestions in this issue.



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### Exercise 1: “Notice the breath”

- Find a relaxed, comfortable but upright position. You could be seated on a chair, the floor or on a cushion. Rest your hands wherever they’re comfortable. You can relax your jaw by resting your tongue on the roof of your mouth.
- Let yourself relax and become curious about your body seated here – can you feel the floor or chair beneath you? Do your best to relax any areas of tightness or tension. Breathe.
- Tune into your breath. You can feel the natural flow—in, out. You don’t need to do anything to your breath. Not long, not short, but natural.
- Notice where you feel your breath in your body. It might be in your tummy or your chest or in your nostrils. See if you can feel the sensations of breath, one breath at a time. When one breath ends, the next breath begins. We are more connected to certain areas of the body than others, at different times of the day.
- Now as you do this, you might notice that your mind may start to wander. You may start thinking about other things. If this happens, it is not a problem. Try to notice that your mind has wandered. You can say “thinking” or “wandering” in your head softly. And then gently redirect your attention right back to the breathing.
- Stay here for five to seven minutes. Notice your breath, in silence. From time to time, you’ll get lost in thought, then return to your breath.
- After a few minutes, once again notice your body, your whole body, seated here. Let yourself relax even more deeply and then, if it is available, please offer yourself some appreciation for doing this practice today.

### Exercise 2: Belly breathing

Place one hand onto your belly, and one onto your chest. Take some normal breaths and notice which hand you feel moving.

If you notice the hand on your chest rising most, you are doing something called Thoracic breathing. This can be helpful when we are doing things like exercise, but it does not help to calm us down. If you felt the hand on you belly move most, you are diaphragmatic breathing, and this is what we want to focus on most.

Imagine you have a balloon in your belly. When you breathe in, you are inflating that balloon. When you breathe out (naturally, not forcing it) you are allowing the balloon to deflate.

This type of breathing calms our stress response. Being mindful of our breathing can really help when we feel stressed or anxious, and it has a real effect on our body and brain!



# Professor Wellbrain



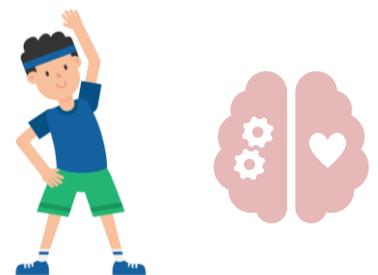
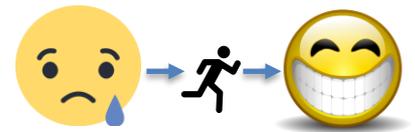
Sometimes we might think of our physical health as being separate to our mental health, but they are very much connected and can have a big impact on each another. So, just like you may need to give your body a rest if you have a cold or get injured, if you feel anxious, stressed, or low, this can sometimes physically affect your body in ways such as: problems sleeping, a loss of energy, tension or aches in the body, difficulty concentrating, or stomach problems.

It is important to listen to and take care of your body and here's how exercise as a form of self-care can positively support your body and mind:

## Exercise

Exercise can help you by:

- Increasing serotonin and endorphins. These are feel-good chemicals which help your brain cells communicate with the nervous system and they help to improve your mood, sleep, appetite, and energy levels.
- Improving sleep patterns. Getting enough sleep can keep the brain healthy.
- Giving you a focused activity that can help you feel a sense of accomplishment and can improve your self-confidence and resilience.
- Releasing tension. Exercise such as dance or yoga can have a relieving effect for the body and the mind and can help ease anxiety.



# Activities for self care

Self-care is all about what you can do to help yourself feel better or to keep yourself feeling good. There are lots of different self-care strategies so you can try out different ones until you find something that works for you. We've added some quotes from young people talking about what they have found helpful in terms of self-care.

By breaking down your self-care approaches into different categories (physical, emotional, social, and practical) it can feel more manageable to positively influence your wellbeing throughout your day.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- Eat a healthy diet
- Try some relaxation techniques
- Time away from technology
- Exercise regularly

"You may think your phone is essential and without it there is nothing to do, but just see how it feels to take yourself away from it for a bit, it doesn't have to be for long but can make a whole lot of difference."

"Being with people who make you feel confident and good about yourself can really boost your mental health. Having a laugh really helps me to feel happier"

## EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Develop friendships that are supportive
- Be kind to yourself
- Write three positive things that you do each day
- Talk to a friend about how you are feeling



## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

- Meet up with friends
- Join a local club or group
- Create a playlist with friends
- Go for a walk with friends or family

"Finding a group of people with similar interests to me really helped my confidence and helped me make new friends"

"It gives you the best foundation to feel good...little things you sometimes forget to do when you're feeling bad...have I drunk enough water today? There are apps that help you to remember all those basic things that are important but often go out the window when I'm feeling rubbish"

## PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

- Organise your day
- Get yourself showered and dressed each morning
- Set some goals for the future
- Learn a new skill



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Even though it's getting colder (and wetter) Autumn is the perfect time to go for a walk. There's so much to see in terms of the changing leaves and wildlife.

Despite the beautiful time of year, it can be difficult to find the motivation to get outside. Why not try the activity below?



### Activity: Photowalking

Photowalking is exactly as it sounds; you go for a walk and take photos. This can be a way of really focussing on your walk rather than being distracted by other things. If you're not sure where to start, try:

1. Take photos at sunset and focus on colours
2. Try different angles (squatting down, standing on a bench etc.)
3. Pick a theme (flowers, close ups, wildlife)
4. Play with filters

Once you've finished your walk you could upload your photos to Instagram with hashtags such as #autumnwalk #photowalk

You can also check out these hashtags for inspiration before you go.



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# Resources: Yoga

## Yoga with Adriene

Some of our families (And some of us in the office) have found Yoga with Adriene a good place to start with yoga. Yoga with Adriene provides easy to follow practices of different lengths and focussing on different themes. It's suitable for beginners and those with some yoga experience. You can find the videos for free on YouTube or on the Yoga with Adriene website: <https://yogawithadriene.com/>



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## Resources: Apps

Research has shown that taking time for brief mindfulness and meditation exercises can help improve:

- Stress
- Self compassion
- Focus and attention
- Mood

Using an app can be an easy way of starting this practice, especially when you're short on time.

**Headspace** offers guided meditations of different types and lengths. You don't need to have any previous knowledge or experience of meditation; it's for everyone. There is a free option with some basic meditations, or you can opt for a subscription to get more variety.

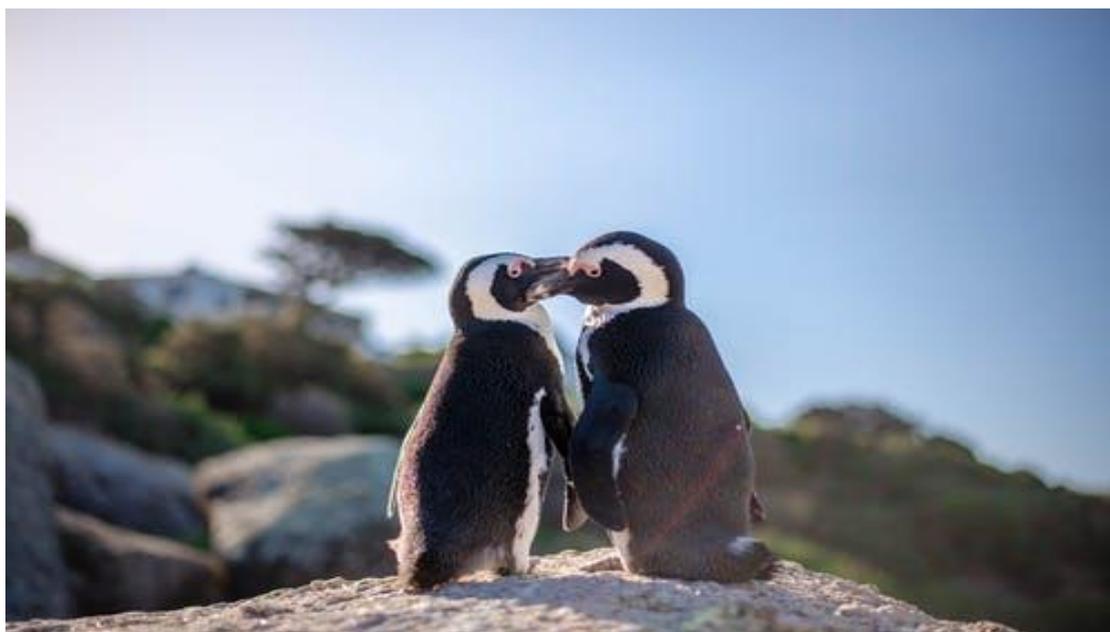
**Calm** also offers guided meditations with a limited amount for free. If you upgrade to the premium subscription there are a variety of exercises including music, videos, and physical exercises.

Both apps can be found on Google Play or the App store.



## Good news story

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This award-winning photograph was taken by photographer Tobias Baumgaertner in Melbourne.

The colony of 1400 Fairy Penguins at St Kilda Pier is monitored by volunteers.

"A volunteer approached me and told me that the white one was an elderly lady who had lost her partner and apparently so did the younger male to the left" Tobias wrote on Instagram. "Since then they meet regularly, comforting each other and standing together for hours watching the dancing lights of the nearby city."

Tobias spent 3 nights with the colony before he was lucky enough to capture this photo. "Between not being able or allowed to use any lights and the tiny penguins continuously moving, rubbing their flippers on each other's backs and cleaning one another, it was really hard to get a shot," he said. "But I got lucky during one beautiful moment."

His photo was picked out as one of the winners in Oceanographic magazine's 'Ocean Photography Awards'.

Although Tobias took the shot a year ago, he released it this year to reflect the isolation caused by the coronavirus pandemic. You can find the original photo here:

<https://mymodernmet.com/widow-penguin-photo-tobias-baumgaertner/>

# 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](mailto: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](http://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/](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](http://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

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**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](mailto: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](mailto: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=CMmGptiMktMCFYWRGwoduCOEjw> 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.