



Mental Health Support for Children

January 2021

(All links are offered in good faith)

Monday 1st February marks the start of Children's Mental Health Week. We all have mental health, like we all have physical health. It's important we take care of both as they are part of our overall wellbeing.

This year's theme is Express Yourself. **Expressing yourself** is about finding ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas, through creativity. This could be through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that make you feel good.

It's important to remember that being able to **express yourself** is not about being the best at something or putting on a performance for others. It is about finding a way to show who you are, and how you see the world, that can help you feel good about yourself.



- Click [HERE](#) for a series of virtual lessons on expressing yourself from experts and familiar faces from across acting, art, dance & more.
- Click [HERE](#) for a message from 'Place2Be's' Royal Patron; HRH The Duchess of Cambridge.

- Click [HERE](#) for a short video from **MindEd** about how to talk to your child about things that may be bothering them.
- Click [HERE](#) for the Parents' Guide to Support with specific mental health conditions and sources of more information (from **Young Minds**).



*In June 2020, YoungMinds reported that 80% of young people agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse. This was often related to increased feelings of anxiety, isolation, a loss of coping mechanisms or a loss of motivation**

it's time to talk. it's
time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Ten tips for talking

1. Mental health isn't just about illness. It is also about wellbeing.
2. Showing you're happy to talk and listen will mean a lot.
3. You don't need to set aside hours. Just opening up the conversation helps.
4. You could chat while doing something else, like driving or preparing dinner.
5. Explain that every one of us has mental health.
6. You don't have to be an expert, or have the answers.
7. Hypothetical situations might be easier to talk about than personal experiences.
8. Familiar ideas might include feeling stressed, depressed, low or anxious
9. You could suggest learning together.
10. There a lots of good information resources on the internet.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here are a few simple ways you can encourage your child to express themselves.

1. Could you build on existing interests or passions? Think about what has helped them get through the past year. A love of dancing? Baking? Drawing? Fashion? Encourage your child by noticing their unique interests and praising their efforts.
2. Trying new things can be a great way to find a new creative outlet. There are lots of online tutorials and video demos that you and your child could be inspired by... could you try out something new together? Or perhaps ask someone you know to share their creative hobbies and give them a go.
3. Some children may not think of themselves as being creative. Try to focus on the importance of the process and the way it can make them feel, rather than the end result. Try not to judge their efforts and remember to give encouragement for trying rather than for doing something well.
4. Listening carefully can help children feel more comfortable and confident when expressing themselves. Try to minimise distractions and give your child your full attention when you're spending time together, being aware of your own body language and eye contact. You might want to try summarising what they've shared and acknowledging their feelings.
5. Children are expressing themselves all the time but not necessarily with words. 'Listen' to everything they are trying to tell you with their behaviour, or with their play and creativity or with their silence. It's all self-expression.
6. Remember – you don't need a lot of expensive equipment to get creative at home. Recyclable materials or older items you no longer have a use for can provide amazing inspiration, and of course there's no limit to your imagination!



Reach for the Stars!

Remember our video from the summer?

Watch it again [HERE!](#)

 Future Learn



University of Reading

Want to know more? Future Learn (in conjunction with the University of Reading) are doing a FREE online course: 'COVID-19: Helping Young People Manage Low Mood & Depression'. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



TOP TIPS



Maintaining a positive mental health during these times is not easy; hopefully the following tips will help:

- Get plenty of sleep (see right!)
- Develop a good routine: get up, have breakfast and get dressed...
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Get plenty of exercise
- Avoid too much negative media coverage (it is depressing!)
- Keep in contact with friends and family (COVID rules allowing - FaceTime?)
- However, try to limit screen time (especially social media)
- Laugh and have fun
- Try a new activity (e.g. cooking) or play a board game together - enjoy learning something new together
- Try hard with your schoolwork (have a Growth Mindset) and ask for help if you're struggling
- Set realistic expectations - don't try to do too much (a 'to do' list helps here)
- Include time to relax & unwind - read a good book
- De-clutter (donate old toys to charity?)
- TALK! (it is perfectly normal to be upset or worried)

Above all, look after YOUR mental health too - it is harder to support your child when you are struggling...

Further support (for children and adults):

- www.thecalmzone.net
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- www.mind.org.uk
- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk

Prefer to speak to someone? Find the helplines here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines>

Sleep!



Getting a good night's sleep is easier said than done. Many young children struggle with this and help is out there...

The Sheffield Directory have put a number of useful links on their page – click [HERE](#) to read more.

The Sheffield Parenting Hub run 1 hour 'Time to Sleep' seminars via Zoom (amongst other things). These can be booked directly through Eventbrite by clicking [HERE](#)