



Mental Health and Well-Being Newsletter – January 2021

Here we go again. It may be our third lock down but it does not feel any easier. Days are shorter, the weather is colder, we are all missing friends and family and the original excitement of “lockdown” has gone. Even in more usual times, the winter months are often seen as something to endure before the promise of spring. Now the question is “How are we going to get through the cold winter months?”

Adopting a **positive winter mind-set** can help us cope. For example, instead of moaning about not being able to meet up in groups, try to be grateful that we are able to wrap up warm and go on a winter walk.



It is also important that we don't feel pressurised to do too much. Many are tired and constantly thinking of things to do can feel like pure fatigue. Sometimes all we can realistically do is take things hour by hour. It is essential that we continue to focus on the things that we can control and allow ourselves to make winter treats part of our routine (hot baths/pizza nights/kids TV hour). It remains true that the biggest and best thing we are able to do for our children right now is to listen to them in terms of their feelings and emotions and talk with them about how the next few weeks might look.

However difficult it may seem, we know that the following can help us get through the next few weeks.

Keep to a routine – keeping some normality and routine is vital. Try, as a family to get back into a routine following Christmas as soon as possible. Get up and go to bed at your normal times. Getting enough sleep, eating regularly and keeping hydrated is essential. Children can be particularly sensitive to upheaval, so try and make their day structured with set ground rules/boundaries, and stick to them. Get them to help you make a visual timetable as we have in school to help plan the days ahead.

Weekly Timetable

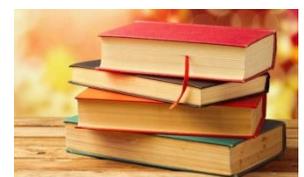
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday / Sunday

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send/managing-transition-home-schooling#timetables>

Variety is the spice of life - a variety of activities will help stave off any boredom. Gardening is a great activity, fun to do with kids and many things can be grown easily on a window sill. <https://www.kidsdogardening.com/growing-cress-heads-with-children/>

Reading a book or keeping your mind active with puzzles/quizzes/crosswords etc. are easy activities to get started with, and there are loads of activities available online for adults and kids, that have been made free during the lockdown. Audible autobooks for kids are still free:

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>



Regular Exercise & fresh air – exercise is often the first thing to go out of the window when our daily routine is disrupted. Exercise not only keeps us physically well, but is also a great way to de-stress and protect our mental health. It doesn't have to be anything fancy; look at how the children embraced the walk to the North Pole Challenge before Christmas. Get the children involved in developing another challenge.



If you are stuck indoors there are lots of on-line classes now available. Joe Wicks has started his online sessions again, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9am. Anything is better than nothing, remember to open the window and let some fresh air in. If it's a clear night why not go out for a walk in the evening and do a bit of stargazing?

Healthy eating – when our routine is disrupted or we get stressed, eating habits can go the same way as our good exercise intentions. Try and eat regular meals. Use it as an opportunity to get adventurous with cooking, so many of our children were able to talk about the baking they had tried over last lockdown. Cooking is a fun activity to do together and educational for them too. It does not have to be expensive There are loads of recipes ideas online if you need them.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/budget>

Stay connected - make the most of technology. We are fortunate to live in an age where there are a huge number of ways to keep connected (telephone, Zoom, Facetime etc). Just because you are in isolation doesn't mean you can't keep in contact, try some of the "older" methods too – children love writing letters to friends and relatives and they love receiving something through the post. Now is a great time to have a pen-friend.

Limit social media & news feeds – it's great to stay informed, *but* tuning in all the time can be damaging and we can find our anxiety ramping up. Try building in a "social media time", limiting access to once a day. Make it a part of your routine and ensure that you get your info from reputable sources such as the NHS and Gov.uk websites

Help neighbours – make time to check on how they are doing, and if you are doing an essential shopping run ask them if they need anything. Doing something for others really helps our own mental health.

A graphic with a light green background. The text "It's OK TO TAKE A break" is written in a black, handwritten-style font. "It's OK" is on the top line, "TO TAKE A" is on the second line, and "break" is on the third line in a larger font.

Look after you mental health and give yourself a break – trying to juggle so much and being everything to everyone is exhausting. It is important to look after yourself so that you can look after others. Calm and Headspace are great resources for anxiety which usually need a subscription but currently are offering free content (see links below). Don't put yourself or your children under too much pressure. Keep your expectations realistic.

Talk and reach out for support – please use the resources below and refer to our website for more agencies that offer help and support during this time.

<https://tannerswood.herts.sch.uk/school-closure/>

Our Family Support Worker is also available: Monday - Friday 8.30am til 4.00pm

Mental health support resources:

Calm – app for meditation, sleep and relaxation, all ages. Currently offering some free content www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath

Headspace – mindfulness resource. ‘Weathering the storm’ collection currently free www.headspace.com/covid-19

British Association of Clinical Psychologists
<https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/28-february-coronavirus-anxiety-how-to-cope-if-you-re-feeling-anxious-about-the-outbreak/>
<https://www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk/five-ways-wellbeing>

Mind, the UK mental health charity, 0300 123 3393
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

Mental Health Europe: “8 ways to look after your mental health”
<https://www.mhe-sme.org/covid-19/>

Samaritans: emotional support (all ages) <https://www.samaritans.org/>

British Psychological Society – useful leaflet on how to talk to children about corona virus (you will need to cut and paste this into your search engine)
<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Talking%20to%20children%20about%20coronavirus.pdf>

Child Helpline International
<https://www.childhelplineinternational.org/child-helplines/tools/coronavirus/>