Welcome to our fourth newsletter! During the lockdown and disruption to schools we wanted to share some resources (see hyperlinks) that parents and carers can do at home when looking after their young people to support their wellbeing.

We are still open for referrals for 1:1 support via phone/video call. Please make a referral via our website. Referrals can come from teachers, other professionals, parents/carers or young people themselves.

https://secureforms.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/mhst/

A lot of the activities and ideas we suggest are based around the 5 Ways to Wellbeing: https://bit.ly/wayswellbeing

A link to our first podcast around how we can use the 5 Ways can be found here: https://bit.ly/5WaysPod

Mindfulness!  Being present & engaging fully in each moment.

**A Gratitude Journal!**
Studies show that intentionally recognizing people and experiences that they are thankful for—on a daily or weekly basis—increases mental wellbeing and positive feelings.

A gratitude journal or list is a great activity to do before bedtime, for you to notice more each day and to be mindful of all the things you can be thankful for. It can be a list of 5 things you appreciated and enjoyed that day, e.g. ‘I am grateful for the colorful flowers I saw on our walk today’. Try this [31 day gratitude journal](#), or get creative and make your own!

**Mindful Morning Routine:** Try this routine to start your day right!

**Waking up.** Keeping your eyes closed, take six deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Listen to your breathing and feel your body waking up.

**Getting up.** As you step out of bed, stand and take a really deep breath, stretch your hands to the ceiling with your fingers pointing upwards, as you exhale, lean forward towards your toes. Make yourself aware of your breathing and how this stretch feels.

**Videos & Resources**
⇒ [Mindfulness](#): Observing A Train of Thoughts
⇒ [FreeMindfulness](#) Free Resources for Mindful Activities
Active!

Exercise is amazing for mental health as it releases chemical endorphins in the brain which are known to improve our mood.

Ring Toss!

Leave 3 paper plates & paint the rest of the plates, making sure each one is a different colour. Decorate them as you like and then cut out the centre of each so it is a ring.

For the cardboard targets you can use paper towel tubes or empty wrapping paper/tin foil roll. Cut this down to 3 parts. You can make it more challenging by making the tubes into different heights! To finish, take the three paper plates you saved at the beginning and glue each of the cardboard tubes onto them to create your targets, then you are ready to go!

Workout Videos:

⇒ 30 Minute Hip-Hop Fit Workout
⇒ 20 Minute-Teen-led Workout

Creative!

Affirmation Stones

Colorful affirmation stones are a fun and simple creative activity. The stones help you to notice and appreciate your positive qualities— they are great for building confidence and self esteem! Stones can also be painted with kind messages for others, with many villages and towns leaving them around for people to look at. Give one as a gift to make their day!

We have made a page of positive affirmations which you can find at the end of the newsletter!

Try Photography!

Photography is such a fantastic way to explore and capture the world around you! Try taking your camera around the house, out in the garden, or out on a walk. You might be interested to look back on these photos to see the empty streets or what activities you were doing in lockdown!

You could even try an app that sends you free prints, then put them on your wall!

Yoga Pose

Try the Couch to 5k Challenge! Get moving outside in the fresh air, boost your happy hormones, and achieve something fantastic in the process!
Science!

Optical Illusions!

An optical illusion is caused by how our visual system is set up, characterized by seeing & perceiving something that differs from reality. These are fun games and it’s super interesting to learn why we experience these illusions the way we do!

- 8 Optical Illusions Explained!
- Create your own Optical Illusions!
- TED Talk: How Optical Illusions Trick Your Brain!
- Optics 4 Kids! - Tons of classic optical illusions and activities such as making a homemade rainbow or Kaleidoscope!

Fun & Games!

Create an Escape Room

Escape rooms are more popular now than ever, and you can still do them even now. There are some fantastic virtual escape rooms to try such as one from Escape Rooms Durham. You can even play with friends at the same time using a video call app!

You could even try this DIY murder mystery room, or if you’re feeling creative you could have a go at making your own escape room for your family or siblings to try!

Make Cake Pops!

This is such a fantastic time to get into cooking and try new recipes! Cake pops are a fun challenge, they look great—and they’re delicious. You can decorate them with different chocolates and sprinkles to make them unique!

Outside Links

Parent Survey from Oxford University: Are you a parent of a child or young person in year 0 (reception/foundation) to year 11? If so please take part in http://cospaceoxford.com/survey

Childline: under 19s can call 0800 1111 for free, confidential support


BBC Bitesize Parent Toolkit for Wellbeing

Self Care Ideas for Children

Supporting Parents who are Worried About Their Children’s Well-being during Lockdown Booklet—Guidance for discussing worries, wellbeing tips etc

CAMHS Oxfordshire: https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/oxon/
Positive affirmations are statements that are repeated to encourage and uplift the person speaking them. Studies show that using positive affirmations can improve confidence, **combat stress** and **boost your overall health**. Give them a go by repeating them to yourself when you’re feeling worried or low, when you need a confidence boost, or even in the morning after brushing your teeth!

- I am a good friend
- I am loved by myself and others
- My body can do many things
- I am proud of myself
- All problems have solutions
- I can do difficult things
- It’s ok to make mistakes
- Mistakes help me learn
- I don’t compare myself to others
- I believe in myself
- I talk about my feelings
- I am kind & thoughtful
- I try and maintain a positive attitude
- Trying my best is enough
- I am going at my own speed
- Trying my best is enough
- I become more confident when I challenge myself
- I accept who I am and love it—strengths & weaknesses
- I know how to calm down when angry or overwhelmed
- I am grateful for what I have
- I am creative
- I can make a difference in the world
- I take the time to help others
- I see the good in myself and others
- I am learning to resolve conflict
- I enjoy doing…..
- I am good at…..
- I am working on…..
- I see challenges as opportunities
- I am unique
- I have the courage to be myself
- I play well with others
- I respect all people and our differences
- I appreciate that things take time
- I strive for progress, not perfection
- I enjoy learning & helping others learn
- I accept people have different opinions
- I have good intentions

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