

# Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff  
Issue 12 – January 2022

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## Welcome to our January Well-Being Newsletter!

May 2022 brings you good physical and mental health.

With the pandemic still upon us, good physical and mental health are at the top of people's wishes for 2022. As we enter a new year laden with uncertainty, our mental health and sense of well-being are being tested again. Anxiety is normal in these difficult times but can be helped with simple tips.

As we reflect on the year that's passing, it is not unusual to formulate wishes and resolutions for the new year. However, 80% of us fail to achieve our new year's resolutions. Most of us strive for unrealistic goals and ultimately set ourselves for failure. But willpower isn't necessarily to blame. The real problem might be the resolutions we picked in the first place. We often set ourselves up for failure by setting goals that are vague, unrealistic, or heavily influenced by what we believe others expect of us. And when we do 'fail,' we are left feeling guilty, disappointed, and self-loathing—a far cry from the strong sense of confidence and empowerment we were after. In this edition, we will look at how to best stick to these resolutions.



## How to challenge our anxious thoughts with helpful thinking



- . Paying attention to our self-talk: how we think has a big effect on how we feel;
- . Identifying thoughts that lead to feelings of anxiety: Paying attention to our shifts in anxiety, no matter how small. Often, we are unaware of our thoughts, but because they have such a big impact on how we feel, it is important to start paying attention to what we are saying to ourselves.
- . When we notice ourselves getting more anxious, that is the time to ask ourselves:
  - “What am I thinking right now?”
  - “What is making me feel anxious?”
  - “What am I worried will happen?”
  - “What bad thing do I expect to happen?”

Sometimes, our anxiety is the result of falling into thinking traps. Thinking traps are unfair or overly negative ways of seeing things. The best question to ask ourselves to challenge our negative thoughts is: Am I basing my judgement on the way I feel instead of the facts?

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## Challenging anxiety:

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**Coping statements.** Try coming up with statements that remind you how you can cope with a situation. For example, “If I get anxious, I will try some calm breathing” or “I just need to do my best” or “This has happened before and I know how to handle it” ; or “My anxiety won’t last forever”.

**Positive self-statements.** Regularly practise being “kind” to yourself (say positive things about yourself), rather than being overly self-critical. For example, instead of saying, “I will fail”, say something like, “I can do it”. Or, “I am not weak for having anxiety. Everyone experiences anxiety” or “I am strong for challenging myself to face the things that scare me”.

Negative thinking can contribute to problems such as social anxiety, depression, stress, and low self-esteem.



**N.B.:** If you struggle with negative thought patterns and it is impacting your life, consider talking to a mental health professional. While it can be tough to share the thoughts you have with someone, therapists can assess your negative thinking patterns and help you create a healthier inner dialogue.

## Children and anxiety



### Strategies to support anxious children

The way you respond to your child’s anxiety will make a big difference in how they learn to cope with anxious feelings:

1. **Validate their feelings:** whatever words you choose, make sure you are essentially saying, “It is okay to be scared and you can choose to be brave,” rather than, “You shouldn’t feel anxious.”
2. **When they are anxious,** ask, “Is your brain giving you a real alarm right now or a false alarm?” Then, help them decide what action to take.
3. **Catch, challenge and change the negative thought:** While it is important to reassure an anxious child, it is even more important to teach them how to treat themselves with kindness and compassion, using healthier self-talk. Then, when you are not there right by their side to offer reassuring words, they can reassure themselves.
4. **Teach Deep Breathing** studies show that slow, deep breathing can help curb symptoms of both depression and anxiety.
5. **Be Aware of Your parenting style:** Some parenting styles can actually make your child's anxiety worse, so it is important to take a look at your parenting style and your interactions with your child.
6. **Seek Professional Help:** If your child’s anxiety lasts more than two weeks, talk to a professional. You should also talk to a professional if your child’s anxiety is interfering with everyday functioning.

Children, just like adults, can overcome anxiety, by being offered the right connection and support.

## New Year Resolutions (if you have any! 😊)

Your goals should be **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound:

**Specific** - Articulate the resolution as clearly as possible. For example, removing sugar as much as possible from your diet is better than telling yourself that you are going to lose 20kg this year.

**Measurable** - Quantify your resolution if possible, i.e. *I will walk 10 minutes a day, instead of I will aim for 10,000 steps a day.*

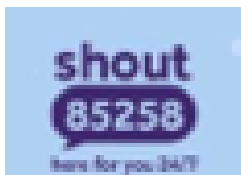
**Attainable** - Choose a goal within the realm of possibility, but yet challenging. *Making 100 friends* this year would be amazing, but probably pretty hard to do. On the other hand, working at nurturing your current friendships is more doable.

**Relevant** - Keep it relevant to your priorities and goals: don’t be influenced by what society tells you how you should be or look like.

**Time-bound** - Give yourself an achievable and realistic time-frame in which to achieve your goal(s).

If you fail at achieving your goal(s), do not despair, be kind to yourself, start again and remember you can start at any time during the year!

## Mental Health Support



Bearevment support for children  
<https://rainbowsgb.org/>



a free online counselling  
 for over 25s



<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>



## Chaplain's Corner



*Dear Lord,*

*We reach out to you in our moments of need  
 and of weakness,*

*Please show us your love so that we might  
 know this is never unchanging,*

*Teach us that human love and kindness  
 begins and grows when inspired by your  
 own love.*

*Let your gentle peace be with us always and  
 allow us to help bring the peace of this to  
 others in their time of need.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord,*

*Amen.*

## Staff Corner



The Headspace App offers free full premium access to  
 teachers & school staff:  
<https://www.headspace.com/educators-covid-19>