

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 24 - February 2023

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Welcome to our February Well-Being Newsletter!

In this month's newsletter, we will approach the subject of social well-being. Social well-being is about building and maintaining healthy relationships and having meaningful interactions with those around us.

Loneliness and social isolation are related but not the same thing. Social isolation is an objective lack of social contacts, which can be measured by the number of relationships a person has. Someone who is socially isolated isn't necessarily lonely, nor is a lonely person necessarily socially isolated.

Social anxiety disorder is a common mental health disorder that usually starts during the teenage years. It can be very distressing and have a big impact on one's life.

Both loneliness and social anxiety will be discussed in this month's edition.



Cost of living crisis - Useful links



<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/government-help-with-gas-electric-bills.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/emergency-funding.aspx>

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/help-cost-living/help-crisis>

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/benefits/emergency_grants_loans_and_money_help

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>

BBC Food Family's £1 recipe meal plan:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/budget_family_meal_plan_for_four#xtor=CS8-1000-%5BEditorialPromo_Box%5D-%5BNewsEditorial_Promo%5D-%5BNewsEditorial_Promo%5D-%5BPS_FOOD~N~~P_budget_meal_plannerFP%5D



Loneliness

We have never been so connected digitally but loneliness has also increased alongside the technological revolution. The pandemic has heightened disadvantages among groups that were already at an increased risk of loneliness.

Certain risk factors increase our chances of severe and lasting loneliness that can affect our mental health. These include:

- Being widowed,
- Being single,
- Being unemployed,
- Living alone,
- Having a long-term health condition or disability,
- Being between 16 and 24 years old,
- Being a carer,
- Being from an ethnic minority community,
- Being LGBTQIA+.

Have a look at some coping strategies that you might find useful

- Try to do things that stimulate your mind: activities that occupy your mind can help with loneliness. It could include taking a course or listening to a podcast. Doing small activities can give you energy and positive feelings.
- Focus on the little connections to help you cope with loneliness. This could be saying hi to a neighbor or talking to the checkout cashier at the shop. It can be hard to connect with others when you are feeling lonely. But there are great benefits in finding people who have been through similar experiences to you. Joining local or safe social media groups can also help connecting with others.
- Having a pet: If you are lucky enough to have a pet, it can be a great way of managing loneliness. Not only do animals provide us with unconditional love and support, but they also help to give structure to our days and even encourage us to get out and connect with others.
- Think about doing a physical activity: physical exercise can help with loneliness. It can be as simple as having a walk in the park when you are feeling a bit overwhelmed.
- Use social media in a positive way: social media can help your mental health. The key is to use it in a positive way. Be aware of how you feel when you use social media and focus on topics and activities that work best for you.
- Talking through your feelings with a professional can help you cope with your feelings of loneliness. It provides you with a safe space to work through your feelings and thoughts without judgement. For more information on getting support for your mental health or how to get support for your loved ones, the NHS website below has a lot of resources, advice and sign posting:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>



How to cope with social anxiety

Social anxiety is more than shyness. It is a fear that does not go away and affects everyday activities, self-confidence, relationships and work or school life.

Many people occasionally worry about social situations, but someone with social anxiety feels overly worried before, during and after them.

Signs that you may have social anxiety:

- worry about everyday activities, such as meeting strangers, starting conversations;
- avoid or worry a lot about social activities, such as group conversations, eating with a group;
- always worry about doing something you think is embarrassing, such as blushing, sweating or appearing incompetent;
- find it difficult to do things when others are watching – you may feel like you are being watched and judged all the time.
- fear of being criticised, avoid eye contact or have low self-esteem;
- often have symptoms like feeling sick, sweating, trembling or a pounding heartbeat (palpitations);

Many people with social anxiety suffer from other mental health issues, such as depression or panic disorder.

How to help myself:

It is a good idea to see your GP if you think you have social anxiety, especially if it has a big impact on your life. It is a common problem and there are treatments that can help.

You can also refer yourself directly to an NHS talking therapy service without a referral from the GP:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/>

Questions to Ask Yourself about your social wellbeing:

- Do I make time to meet my family and friends?
- Do I express appreciation and affection for the people who support me?
- Do I find my relationships to be positive, enriching, and authentic?
- Do I make an effort to interact with a variety of people with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs?



Take part in activities that support you, your family and friends, and your community with positive mental well-being.*

More information on:

<https://nhsfreeyourmind.co.uk/be-well-challenge/>



*The NHS Free Your Mind website has a lot of resources to support everyone's mental health, whether you are a child, a young or older adult. It also includes sign-posting to support services:

<https://nhsfreeyourmind.co.uk/>

Things to do in London with children this February half-term

- Explore a child-friendly free museum: <https://www.timeout.com/london/kids/activities/free-things-to-do-with-the-kids-in-london>.
- London City Farms: Get a little bit of rural life in London: <https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/city-farms-in-london>.
- Some child-friendly cycle routes in London: <https://bobbinbikes.com/blogs/blog/child-friendly-cycle-routes-london>.
- Discover a royal park you have never been before: <https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks>.
- The best indoors activities for children in London: <https://www.timeout.com/london/kids/the-best-indoor-activities-in-london-for-kids>.
- The Imagine Children's Festival at the South Bank London – with more than 100 events, 50% of them are free: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/imagine-childrens-festival>.



Chaplain's Corner



Dear Lord,

I give thanks for my friends, for connection and laughter, for comfort and strength, for encouragement and unity, for forgiveness and grace, for celebration and joy.

I pray you guide me and them to make the right choices and to support each other in good times and more importantly, in bad.

May you lead myself and those around me to abundance, and encourage us to share the love and kindness we show to our friends to everyone we meet, so no-one feels left behind.

Amen.

Help and Guidance

**Services available
all year round:**



Bereavement Support
for Children



Free text message support
service for young people



Free online emotional
advice for young people



Free advice and support



Free online counselling support
for over 25s



Bereavement Support for children
<https://rainbowsgb.org/>



**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
800-273-8255 (TALK)**

Your GP surgery:

Your doctor can help you work out what kind of support you need and introduce you to the right mental health service. This is known as a GP referral.

