

Supporting Children and Young People

The sudden change in children's routine, combined with the Covid-19 crisis will be unsettling, and younger ones might find it difficult to understand what's happening. But there are lots of things we can do to look after children's mental health and wellbeing during children's mental health week.

Create a routine and Structure.

Try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. Keep it similar as if they were attending school. A good night's sleep is also really important for children to be able to manage their anxiety and other emotions.

Let them talk about their worries.

Encourage your child to talk about their feelings. Before bedtime ask your child to name three positive things about their day. Let them know there is always someone to listen if they want to talk. If your child worries about a lot of little things, set up worry time. Set aside a short period of time each day to discuss their worries without any distractions.

Stay connected.

Although contact is restricted at the moment, it is still very important. You can still connect with family and friends through FaceTime, Zoom, WhatsApp, Purple Mash, telephone, text, social media or even a letter.

Accept and Listen.

Naturally as parents we want to reassure our children, however in doing this sometimes to children we can appear to be dismissing how they are feeling. Value what they say without judging their feelings. Then together work through their emotions in a more productive way.

Encourage their interests.

Doing what we enjoy can help with our mental health. Connect with your child through play or doing an activity that they are interested in. Encourage and support them to explore their interests. Then share photos remotely with family, friends or their class teacher of their achievements.

Praise them.

Praise your child's positive behaviours, ensure to recognise their efforts as well as their achievements. Give praise for small steps.

Be a positive role model.

Look after your own mental health and wellbeing. Children are intuitive and will pick up on our feelings of stress and anxiety.

Helpful resources

YoungMinds

www.youngminds.org.uk

Telephone 0808 802 5544

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

Place2Be

www.place2be.org.uk

Place2be is a children's mental health charity working with pupils, families and staff in UK schools.

MindEd

www.minded.org.uk

MindEd is a free educational resource on children and Young people's mental health for all adults. MindEd for Families has online advice and information from trusted sources and will help you to understand and identify early issues and best support your child.

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111

Childline is a counselling service for Children, Young People and Parents.

Chat Health

Chat Health is a new mobile health service for parents and young people in Somerset making it easier to get health and wellbeing advice. Available Monday-Friday 9am - 5pm.

Parents of children 0-4: Just send a text 07480 635514

Parents of children 5-19 years: Text 07480 635515

Young People 11-19 years: Text 07480 635516