

Southampton Mental Health Support Team

Primary Schools Wellbeing Newsletter

This week's theme - ADHD

27th May 2020

Welcome to this week's Southampton MHST newsletter, our theme this week is ADHD.

The next few weeks we will be offering up support and tips for parents of children living with Neuro-diversity although many of the tips will be useful for all children. This week our focus will be on children and young people with a diagnosis of or traits of ADHD.

The current restrictions on our daily lives are tough on everyone, however, for families living with ADHD the challenges are magnified and things can become really difficult. Those experiencing ADHD have difficulty in concentrating, tend to fidget, can be forgetful and are sometimes impulsive. All these things can have an effect on being able to cope with life in lockdown from trying to complete school work at home, to managing with less structured days. Children and young people with ADHD can feel low or anxious or very frustrated as a result of the difficulties they face in daily life and activities and this can lead to increased tensions in key relationships and difficulties at home.

In this newsletter we have another visit from our trusted advisor, Professor Brainwell who can tell us a bit more about ADHD. We also have some great tips for parents for managing and coping with ADHD during lockdown and information about where you can seek further support if you need it. Coming up next week we will be focussing on support and advice for families with Children and Young People living with Autism.

Department for Education update

We have condensed information released from the Department for Education into a shorter update of their main points and news. This has been sent as a separate attachment to this newsletter.



Parents Top Tips

The coronavirus pandemic is creating unprecedented challenges for many families.

Children with neurodevelopmental disorders, such as ADHD, are particularly vulnerable to the distress and uncertainty caused by the pandemic and might display increased behavioural problems. Unexpected changes to routine can also cause additional anxiety.

Below are some suggestions which might help you, as parents, to support your child through these difficult times:

1. Structure the day – all children will benefit from structure during this uncertain time, but children with ADHD particularly more so. Having a timetable posted somewhere at home, where your child/ren can see it, highlighting what they are going to be doing at any given time of the day may really benefit them. Visual tools can really help to explain to your child what is happening.
2. Think in terms of learning bursts – research has shown that children can only really focus and work effectively for 45 minutes at the most. Try and engage your child/ren in learning activities for a period of time that is realistic for their attention span and then give them a break. Children with ADHD benefit with having clear expectations put in place in advance, knowing how long each time period will last and what is expected of them in that session. You can check to see if they did the work as expected.
3. Alternate activities – it can help to stagger activities based on least preferred activities followed by more preferred activities – so, 45 minutes of school work followed by an activity they really enjoy as a reward. A simple activity at home which can help to expel excess energy is to simply get your child to rip up all the recycling rubbish. Your child can stomp on boxes either on the floor or when they are in the recycle bag. Ripping and pushing down boxes helps with releasing anger and frustration.
4. Move about - physical exercise is known to help manage symptoms of ADHD, so it would be beneficial to go outside and incorporate short exercise breaks throughout the day.
5. Communicate with the school – ask what has worked well for your child in the past at school and how you might maintain continuity at home. It might be helpful to know how much of a role you should be taking on in keeping your child organised, focused and on task.
6. Use positive attention – Children with ADHD need their feedback immediate, intense and specific “that’s amazing you’ve started your learning so quickly”.
7. Be consistent about medication – children taking medication for ADHD should continue to do so.
8. Ask for help and support if you need it – these are challenging unprecedented times and it is important to be kind and gentle on yourself and your child.

Professor Wellbrain

Professor Wellbrain has flown by to give us some information on ADHD. ADHD is a neurodevelopment condition meaning the brain works differently compared with someone who doesn't have ADHD, which means you learn in a different way, and you may behave differently. You can't change it, but you can learn to manage it, and it can even give you certain advantages!



The main features of ADHD are:

- A short attention span
- Impulsivity (which means that children cannot stop themselves from doing things)
- Overactive behaviour

Other signs of ADHD which your child may show:

- A poor short-term memory (remembering things they are asked to do immediately)
- Hating to wait – therefore they will do anything to avoid being bored
- Talking and fidgeting when they are supposed to sit quietly
- Interrupting when people are talking

During this pandemic children and young people with ADHD or have traits of ADHD, may be really struggling with the loss of their normal day to day routines, particularly if they cannot get outside so regularly to burn off the excess energy they often experience. All this can lead to an increase of stress leading to things like:

Problems sleeping, feeling anxious or irritable, feeling angry or losing their temper, worrying, making risky decisions, headaches and tension.

For children, young people and adults with anxious ADHD, regular exercise improves mental focus and other executive functions. When you exercise, your brain gets a boost of blood flow increasing Serotonin (the happy chemical) neurotransmitters in the brain. Serotonin contributes to wellbeing and happiness. When you are giving your heart a workout you are also giving your brain a good workout, helping it to optimise at a greater level. Regular exercise also acts as an antidepressant and anti-anxiety agent. It is important to learn how to slow down and relax too.

Here are some examples of relaxing routines to try:

- Frown as hard as you can, hold it while you count to 10, then relax your face for a count of 20
- Spread your fingers out as far as they will go, hold it for 10, and relax for 20
- Tense your stomach muscles for 10, then relax for 20
- Flex your feet and straighten your legs, holding for 10 then relax for 20

You might find it hard to 'relax for 20' at first, keep trying, you will get better with practice. Don't worry if you start to feel tired – that means you really are relaxing!

Tips to beat sudden feelings of discouragement:

- Get a good sleep. If you cannot get a good night sleep – it is okay to nap in the day. Lots of people are having naps in the day during the pandemic. It is a good idea to set a timer for around 20-30 minutes max when you nap to prevent your sleep cycle from becoming disordered.
- Schedule some exercise into your daily routine. This will encourage the positive endorphins (chemical in the body which improves mood & energy levels) to overcome symptoms of mild depression and anxiety.
- Set goals for the week. Identify at least 5 little goals you can achieve in the next week. For example making your bed every morning, eating breakfast every morning.

Did you know the following celebrities have ADHD who have managed and utilised the condition to their benefit: Actors Jim Carrey, Tom Cruise & Robin Williams. Music artist/producer Will.i.am, Justin Timberlake, Olympic medallists Simone Biles & Louis Smith (gymnastics), Michael Phelps (swimmer) and business entrepreneurs Richard Branson & Bill Gates.

The way your brain works with ADHD may also make you more creative, better at problem solving or able to do lots of things at once.

Good News Story

Motivational Pegs

A man from Leicestershire has been leaving pegs with motivational messages written on them, in woodland.



He has done this to help people who might be struggling with their mental health at the moment and during lockdown. The idea was inspired by his own anxiety, leaving the pegs on trees with the hope that someone might see them when they are struggling and it might cheer them up.

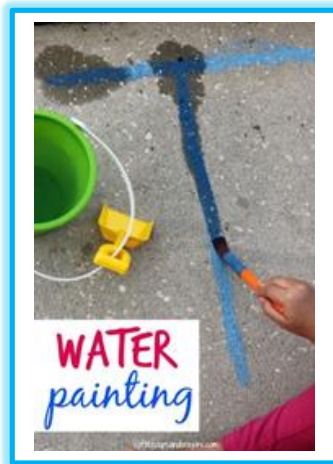
We love this idea and think it would be lovely to recreate locally. All that is needed is a wooden peg and a pen to write a message then take it out on a walk.

Activity of the Week

Water Painting

Water painting is an ideal activity in this warmer weather. Let your children release their inner artist. Equipment is minimal

- Water
- Paint brushes/rollers/ hands (whatever they want to paint with)
- Outdoor surface to paint on



Grab the water and painting utensils and head outside, children (and adults) can draw whatever they like then watch it evaporate in the sun (good science lesson there too). Some ideas could be to paint a race track, portraits, handwriting practice or whatever is chosen . . . the possibilities are endless.

Keeping Active

Rainbow Hunt

With so many people having rainbows in their windows or decorating the local area, why not go on a rainbow hunt and see how many you can spot while out walking. You could try different routes each day to see where the most are.



Contact us

If you have any questions or queries for the
Southampton MHST Team please email us at;
SouthamptonMHST@Solent.nhs.uk

Useful Services and Websites for Parents and Young People

Please see the details of the following services that may also be able to offer you and your child advice and support. Please note that during this unprecedented time services have had to change the way they work and offer support, so please contact the service directly to find out what is currently on offer.

THE SOLENT WEST CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (CAMHS):

If your child is currently receiving a service from CAMHS, a duty line for advice in the event of deterioration in your child / young person's mental health is available. Please request to speak to the duty worker on 0300 123 6661. You are also able to contact the Behaviour Helpline for advice and strategies with managing challenging behaviour on 0300 123 6661, your contact details will be taken and a Behaviour Advisor will return your call within 1 week. **Please be aware that in the current situation there may be a slight delay in responding to duty calls.**

The Public Health Nursing (PHN) Service offers support to children, young people and their families who live in Southampton. The team is made up of Nurses, Emotional Health and Wellbeing workers and PHN Assistants; who can offer support for a wide range of health issues such as growth concerns, support with long term conditions, sleep problems, continence issues, general anxiety and much more. They have a confidential text messaging service called Solent Pulse where you can text any health questions and have them answered by a nurse. They are currently offering support through telephone calls, emails, text messages and video calling to comply with social distancing rules. If you would like to contact PHN for support please use one of the methods below:

Phone: 0300 123 6661 Solent Pulse: 07491 163278

Website: <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/solent/school-nursing>

Email: snhs.publichealthnursingsouthampton@nhs.net

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Southampton Multi-Agency Support Hub: 02380 833336
(Safeguarding advice & parenting support).

Samaritans: Free phone 116 123

Parentline (24 hour advice): 0808 800 2222

Child line: 0800 1111

NHS direct: 111 – non emergency helpline

SANE mental health help line (every day 16.30-22.30) 0300 304 7000

Young Minds help line (Mon-Fri 9.30-4pm) 0808 802 5544

USEFUL WEBSITES – UNDERSTANDING SYMPTOMS, ADVICE AND SELF-HELP:

- <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/> - This covers numerous 'symptoms' of developmental disorders and mental health conditions. It also has a lot of helpful advice ranging from 'online safety' to 'getting children to eat greens'. Mixture of articles and short videos.
- www.youngminds.org.uk – information and advice for young people, parents and professionals, includes a telephone advice line and videos. This website covers emotional health, mental health conditions and neurodevelopmental disorders e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- http://www.sane.org.uk/resources/mental_health_conditions/ - information and advice, includes resources and useful leaflets to manage symptoms of many mental health symptoms. It also has online forums and a telephone advice line (above).
- www.getselfhelp.co.uk – this website is an invaluable resource containing free downloadable activities and videos for you to support your child to manage their emotional and mental health.
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/> - Similar to 'getselfhelp'.
- **Selected mobile phone 'apps'** to help manage symptoms can be viewed here, although please consider age appropriateness: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-health-apps.aspx> (Or type 'Apps for Mental Health – NHS Choices into an internet search engine.)

Useful Services continued

NO LIMITS ADVICE PROJECT – <https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/> Contact Phone: 02380 224 224 – 13 The High Street, Southampton, SO17 1XN Email: enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk

Please contact the service via telephone, email or ‘drop-in’ to the advice centre.

The No Limits service offer advice and support to young people under the age of 26 years on many issues, including: housing, employment, money management advice, social support, symptoms of mental health, counselling for emotional ill-health, sexual health guidance, drug and alcohol support, victims and perpetrators of crime, plus much more.

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL PARENTING ADVICE AND SUPPORT:

<http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/results.action?familychannel=8-7-1> – Please access this website to view a range of parenting support courses in Southampton. Or go into Southampton City Council’s website and type ‘families’ into the search bar.

Please also contact the Southampton City Council MASH Team on the telephone number above for further advice around services and parenting support.

RE:MINDS:

A parent-led support group for families of children with autism or mental health issues.

<https://www.reminds.org.uk/> With a closed Facebook group of over 600 members -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/reminds>

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

[The Buzz Network](#) - a group for Southampton parents/carers of children with disabilities/special needs. It is open to children with any disability from ADHD to visual impairments, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

<http://sid.southampton.gov.uk> – type ‘Buzz Network’ into the search engine for contact details.

CHILDREN WITH SUSPECTED AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/> -

Autism Hampshire: Information, Advice, ‘Needs Assessment’ and support. Community Access, Southampton Office -1648 Parkway, Whiteley, PO15 7AH, Tel: 02380 766162 Email:

communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

- <http://www.theredlipstickfoundation.org/> - The Red Lipstick Foundation are here to offer services to families in Hampshire who have been bereaved by suicide or immediate family members following a person’s sudden death.
- <http://www.simonsays.org.uk/> - Tel: 08453 055 744 - Bereavement service for Children.
- <http://www.cruse.org.uk/?gclid=CMmGptiMktMCFYWRGwoduC0Ejw> - National Bereavement Service.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICES:

- <https://www.hamptontrust.org.uk/our-programmes/> - support projects for those who have perpetrated domestic abuse, and, adults and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.
- <https://www.yellowdoor.org.uk/> - Telephone: 023 8063 6313 - support project for adults and young people who have experienced physical and or sexual abuse.