



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

Information for parents and carers

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is a service in Reading to support children, young people and their families in achieving good mental wellbeing. We work with children and young people who are experiencing:

- Mild to moderate low mood
- Mild to moderate anxiety
- Behavioural management issues

We work with children, young people, their parents/carers and their school to help improve resilience, problem-solve difficulties and develop coping strategies to support mental health.

We offer short term (6-8 sessions) of evidence-based interventions that are catered to the difficulties your child or young person may be experiencing. We might also put your child in touch with other professionals who can offer other support.

How can I get help? Talk to your child's teacher or SENCo about making a MHST referral, or you can use our online referral form yourself. The form can be found at: www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/MHST

If you have been referred to us we will contact you to discuss the difficulties your child is experiencing and look at what you would like to change.

We offer: one-to-one or group support at your child's school; support over the telephone or online via Microsoft Teams.

Supporting anxiety (Feelings of worry, fear and panic)

It's normal to worry. Anxiety is a normal human response to feeling threatened or in danger, even if that threat or danger is a thought, image or memory.

As well as emotional feelings, you might:

- experience physical (body) sensations such as a racing heart, breathing fast, sweaty hands, dry mouth and feeling shaky.
- have "what if" or negative thoughts pop into your head.

When these feelings begin to get in the way of doing things you enjoy and other aspects of life it is a sign that you may need some extra support.

MHST can offer:

- **Worry management** - strategies to help you relax in anxious situations
- **Graded exposure** - A plan towards facing your worries
- **Support with exam stress**
- **Support for parents** – using the Overcoming Your Child’s Fears and Worries programme.

This might be in a group or 1:1.



Supporting low mood/depression

Feeling sad sometimes is normal, but when that sadness still won't go away after two weeks, your child/young person may need a little extra support.

It can:

- impact on the way we feel, think and behave
- happen as a reaction to difficult experiences such as bullying or family relationship difficulties
- sometimes happen without any obvious reason.

What it's like?:

- We could feel a range of emotions including sadness, stress, hopelessness, loneliness, anger or emptiness
- We may often have negative thoughts about ourselves, other people, the future or life in general
- It can be hard to carry out usual routines and tasks including self-care.

MHST can offer:

- **Behavioural activation** - exploring the things that are important to your child and carefully planning them into their day-to-day routines.

This is usually on a 1:1 basis.

- **Emotional Regulation** – helps your child notice and manage big emotions e.g. anger, stress and frustration.

Behaviour management issues

MHST can offer:

- **Engagement work with our outreach worker** – This might be 1:1 or in a group.
- **Support for parents of primary aged pupils** – using the Webster Stratton Incredible Years programme. This is usually on a 1:1 basis.

The MHST operates 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. If you need to speak to someone urgently about your mental health you could contact:

- Your GP
- Childline – www.childline.org.uk (phone: 0800 1111 or text 'shout' to 85258)
- Samaritans – www.samaritans.org (phone: 116123)
- CAMHS Urgent Care – (phone: 0300 365 1234)

In an emergency or if you feel unsafe call 999.



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

0118 937 3641

info@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Brighter Futures for Children Ltd, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU

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