

John Spendluffe Technology College places a high value on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all students in our care.

We work in partnership with the Mental Health Support Team, Lincolnshire NHS Trust, Skegness branch.

The aim of this leaflet is to raise awareness of common mental health issues. The information in this leaflet is by no means exhaustive and is intended as a starting point. If you have any concerns about the mental health and emotional wellbeing of your child, we recommend that you follow the guidance below in our 'What to do if you have a concern' section of this leaflet.

### What is meant by 'Mental Health'?

We all have mental health – whether it is good, bad or in the middle. Put simply, your mental health is the way you feel on any particular day.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is 'a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'

*'Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behaviour (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress and / or problems functioning in social, work or family activities.'* (The American Psychiatric Association (APA), 2018)

### Signs to look out for

#### General signs

- Declining or significant change in school attendance for no identifiable reason
- Declining or significant change in school performance for no obvious reason
- Declining or significant change in behaviour in classroom and / or around school
- Social withdrawal and extreme self-isolation
- Persistent tiredness / insomnia
- Changes to eating habits: persistent loss of appetite or restrictive eating or comfort eating
- Noticeable or significant weight loss or gain
- Persistent low mood/unhappiness/irritability
- Persistent aggression towards peers or authority figures
- Negative talk about themselves / expressing hopelessness / despair / suicidal talk
- Scratches, cuts, bruises or obvious signs of self-harm
- Difficulty managing worries or anxious feelings

- Extreme over-defensiveness or paranoia
- Distressing unusual perceptions, hallucinations, voices or extreme beliefs

**This is not a definitive list.** Trust your own gut feeling and knowledge of the child / young person in your care.

## What to do if you have a concern

If you feel concerned about the mental health of your child, find a quiet, private space to ask them how they are doing and if it feels like they give an evasive or superficial reply, ask them again (the 'double tap').

Show your genuine interest, a lack of judgement and listen to them. Give the conversation your full attention. If your child is resistant to talk to you, don't force the situation and instead find out who else they feel they could talk to. For further advice about how to approach conversations about mental health, see the '*Talking Mental Health with Young People at Secondary School*' leaflet by the Anna Freud Centre.

1. Talk to your child about the ways they can look after their mental health. Refer to our '9 Ways' and 'Do you need to speak to someone?' posters to signpost your child to appropriate in-school staff and external professional support, e.g. Kooth; SHOUT 85258. These posters are displayed around the school site; copies are included in this leaflet.

2. If you are still concerned about your child's mental health, please talk your child's **tutor** and / or **progress team**. We work with professional clinicians: our Mental Health Support Team is the Skegness branch of the NHS Lincolnshire Foundation Trust. Your child's tutor or progress team can make a referral via the school's Senior Mental Health Lead (Mrs Powell, Assistant Headteacher) who will make an initial assessment. Additionally, we can refer your child to one of our in-school counsellors instead, if appropriate.

3. Alternatively, you can seek professional help through your **GP** and / or the **Lincolnshire 24 hour advice line**, [Here4You: 0800 234 6342](tel:08002346342). This **self-referral** service is available to students, parents / carers. This service must not be used to report safeguarding concerns\*.

\*If you think a child or young person is at risk of harm to themselves or others, contact our school Safeguarding Team swiftly for advice

\*If there is a risk to life and you think a child or young person is in immediate danger, call 999.

## Common mental health difficulties

- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Health Anxiety Disorder
- Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Phobia
- Obsessional Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Depression
- Panic Disorder
- Post Traumatic Disorder (PTSD)

## Some signs of common mental health presentations

### *Separation Anxiety Disorder*

- Refusal of being away from home
- Not wanting to be home alone
- Recurrent and excessive distress about anticipating, or being away from home or loved ones
- Constant worry that something bad will happen, such as being lost or kidnapped
- Frequent complaints of headaches, stomach-aches or other symptoms when separation from a parent / loved one is anticipated

### *Health Anxiety*

- Spending so much time worrying they are ill or getting ill that it starts taking over life
- Checking their body for signs of illness
- Always asking for reassurance that they are not ill
- Worrying that their doctor or medical tests may have missed something
- Obsessively looking at health information on the internet or in the media
- Behave as if they are ill (for example, avoiding physical activities)
- Anxiety itself can cause symptoms like headaches or a racing heartbeat, and they may mistake these for signs of illness

### *Generalised Anxiety Disorder*

- Everyone experiences anxiety – it is 'normal' to feel anxious before sitting an exam for example
- However, some people find it hard to control their worries-their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily lives
- GAD is a long-term condition that causes anxiety about a *wide range* of situations and issues, rather than one specific event
- As soon as one anxious thought is resolved, another may appear about a different issue
- Many 'What If' thoughts

### *Phobia*

- A phobia is an overwhelming and debilitating fear of an object, place, situation, feeling or animal
- Phobias are more pronounced than fears. They develop when a person has an exaggerated or unrealistic sense of danger about a situation or object
- If a phobia becomes very severe, a person may organise their life around avoiding the thing that's causing them anxiety. As well as restricting their day-to-day life, it can also cause a lot of distress

### *Obsessive Compulsive Disorder*

- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is an anxiety disorder whereas a person struggles with Obsessions and Compulsions
- Sometimes behaviours can be associated with GAD

- ❑ A person with OCD will usually have Obsessive Thoughts such as ‘if I think this, it will happen’ or ‘my thoughts must mean there’s something wrong with me’
- ❑ A common belief amongst people suffering with OCD is that they will be responsible for something bad happening to others
- ❑ Compulsions can include counting, touching things a particular way, or avoiding touching objects all together due to fears of contamination, excessive cleaning

### *Depression*

- ❑ Everyone has ups and downs. Sometimes you might feel a bit low, for lots of different reasons
- ❑ May experience many negative thoughts such as; ‘what’s the point?’ ‘I’m a burden ‘I’m useless’ ‘Nothing will get better’
- ❑ May experience emotions such as sadness, guilt, worthlessness and hopelessness
- ❑ Struggles with sleep and appetite, motivation, lethargy and poor concentration
- ❑ Begin to withdraw from people and activities previously enjoyed

### *Panic Disorder*

- ❑ Experience regular and sudden attacks of panic or fear
- ❑ Can often happen for no apparent reason
- ❑ Physiological responses are severe and perceived as ‘I’m having a heart attack’ ‘I’m going to die’
- ❑ Results in avoidance of certain situations due to fears of another attack
- ❑ This can create a cycle of living "in fear of fear". It can add to your sense of panic and may cause you to have more attacks

### *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

- ❑ Lots of people experience Trauma – only a small percentage of people will go on to develop PTSD
- ❑ It is normal to experience distressing emotions following a trauma – most people need time to process and this can to be done without an intervention
- ❑ Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may develop after experiencing, or seeing, something that you find traumatic (a trauma)
- ❑ The symptoms of PTSD can start immediately or after a delay of weeks or months. It will usually start within 6 months of the traumatic event
- ❑ The development of the illness depends on how you deal with the experience. It is not dependent on the severity of the experience.
- ❑ Symptoms include traumatic memories or dreams, avoiding things that remind you of the event, not being able to sleep and feeling anxious. They may feel isolated and withdrawn





# Supporting our students

Where and who can I get help from?

Family and Friends

Peer Mentors, Student Ambassadors and Form Tutors

Progress and Pastoral Teams

Kooth- online support service  
SHOUT 85258- text service

Schools Safeguarding Team- Mrs Paice and Mr Thornalley

School Counsellor- Needbright Solutions, ELSA  
Mental Health Champions

External Support, such as Healthy Minds, CAHMS and NHS  
Mental Health Support Team

DO YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE?

SPEAK TO YOUR TUTOR OR THE PASTORAL TEAM!  
(BUT ANY ADULT CAN HELP!)



**FRANK**

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)  
- Information and advice on drugs.



[www.theproudtrust.org](http://www.theproudtrust.org)

Advice on LGBT+ issues, including relationships

**ChildLine**

0800 1111



- Advice on a variety of topics - friendship, bullying, puberty and relationships.

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Sexwise**

[www.sexwise.fpa.org.uk](http://www.sexwise.fpa.org.uk)

- Advice on relationships and sexual health.

**carerstrust**

[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)  
- Advice and support for carers, including young carers.

**THINK U KNOW**

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

- Advice about staying safe online.

**betty for schools**

[www.bettyforschools.org.uk](http://www.bettyforschools.org.uk)

Advice on puberty and periods for girls.

**shout 85258**

here for you 24/7

[www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)

Advice on mental health and free support.

**kooth**

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

Free support for mental health and online counselling.

YOU CAN FIND LOTS OF USEFUL INFORMATION ON THE WEBSITES ABOVE!



# 9 ways to care for mental health.



## Keep Active

Exercise helps! Try to keep moving. Take part in P.E., go for a walk, ride a bike or take up an extracurricular activity!



## Take a break.

We all have lots of work to do but make sure to have small breaks to de-stress!

- Chat with friends
- Read a book
- Watch something
- Take a walk



## Eat well



Make sure to eat 3 balanced meals a day and try to stay away from too much sugar!

## Be Yourself!

Accept who you are! Don't try to be someone you're not!



You're amazing!

## Talk about your feelings.

Don't bottle up your feelings. You can talk to your friends, family or even an adult at school. If you're too nervous to do this, you can also call **Childline on 0800 1111**



## Get enough sleep!

Not sleeping enough can make a massive impact on your wellbeing!

Teenagers should get between 8-9 hours a night!



## Ask for help!

Make sure you keep in touch with friends and family.

Don't shut yourself away!



If you need help, don't be afraid to ask friends, family or an adult at school!

## Help others!

Whether this be helping family, friends or those around school.

Helping others can make someone's day!



## Do something you enjoy!

Make time for the things you love to do, e.g.

- Gaming
- Football
- Drawing
- Singing

