

Introducing the **Mental Health Support Team** in your primary school

We are the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) and we work with, and in, your school and we aim to promote good emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. We endeavour to support children and their families through prevention, early intervention and education.

Our team consist of Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) and Child Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs) who are based in your child's school.



What do we offer?

For children in primary school, the evidence base suggests that working with parents, with some contact with children, rather than working directly with the child is more effective for making changes and improvements in children's mental health, wellbeing and behaviour.

We assess all referrals on an individual basis, however as a majority the interventions we offer to primary school children are done through parents/carers, so as to equip the parents/carers with supporting the children with their needs.

WE WORK WITH PARENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO ARE:

- Feeling Anxious
- Worried
- Stressed
- Fearful
- Overwhelmed
- Having Behavioural Difficulties
- Frustrated
- Having Frequent Tantrums
- Difficulty Following Routines

AIMS OF PARENTING SUPPORT:

- Guided self-help aims to empower you to develop the tools and skills necessary to help tackle the difficulties your child is experiencing as a family
- We work together with parents to develop coping strategies to manage your child's distressing thoughts and increase resilience to future problems
- You as a parent will play an active part; reading materials before each session, practicing strategies at home and problem-solving with the practitioner's support



IN YOUR SCHOOL OUR TEAM WILL PROVIDE:

- 1:1 work with parents providing guided self-help to support challenging behaviour or anxiety
- Group parenting classes to include issues around behavioural and communication difficulties
- Groups and workshops for children on topics such as transitions from primary to secondary school, bullying, anxiety, mental health awareness, mindfulness and how to look after your emotional wellbeing
- Parent coffee mornings
- Mental health assemblies

OUR SESSIONS WILL BE:

- 6-8 weeks long and delivered on a weekly basis
- 20-50 minutes long and take place in school/ over the phone / on ZOOM digital platform

HOW TO REFER:

In order to refer your child to our service please speak to your child's teacher or a designated staff member in school and they will be able to assist you further.

Once the referral is made one of our senior members of staff will contact you for more information and allocate you to the EMHP/CWP based in your school.

Following that the EMHP/CWP will contact you to book the first session.

Read JP's Story:

My name is JP (Pseudonym) and I attend a Primary school in Central London.

What I usually struggle with:

- Attending history classes where topics around wars and beheadings are discussed.
- Going out at night when it is dark.
- Public performance such as swimming.
- Completing sleepovers at my friends' house.

Here is the type of work the Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) did with my parents:

- 8 week guided-self-help based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy principles. These suggest that our behaviour, feelings and thoughts are interlinked.
- The EMHP supported my parents in developing skills that they could then use to help me manage my anxiety.
- The EMHP explained to my parents the importance of supporting me in gradually exposing myself to a mild anxiety provoking situations, such as sleepovers.

- My parents encouraged me to fall asleep on my own and then spend longer hours playing at my friends' house and cousins.
- My ultimate goal was to complete a sleepover at my best friend's house!

How do we know that this works?

According to Creswell and Willets (2019), in order to overcome their fears, children are to face situations that trigger anxiety in them, so that they can gather new information that can challenge the extent to which they believe they can cope with their worries. Evidence shows that exposure is effective in reducing anxiety in children.

Outcome:

"By the end of the sessions that my parents had with the EMHP, I have learnt what anxiety is, how I experience it and that it is a normal part of life. My parents have been able to teach me useful strategies to manage my anxiety and I have learnt that the best way to deal with it is to expose myself to the situation and learn from it!"

For more information:

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