The Mental Health Support in Schools Team

Newsletter

Spring Term| Issue 1 | January 2021

Happy New Year... and welcome to the first MHST newsletter

Dear School Colleagues,

A New Year is upon us and we are excited to introduce our very first team newsletter to you all! I think you will join us in celebrating having negotiated our way through a very tough 2020. We've spent a lot of time adjusting to a new normal, washing our hands, wearing masks and being constantly told 'you're on mute!'. Like you, we have adapted to different ways of working in order to deliver support to children and young people. We will continue to support you through our consultation sessions and continue to support your pupils. We are all being tested regularly and soon to be vaccinated, so we can continue to deliver our support, face to face where safe to do so as well as through our online platform. We are looking forward to building on the good work and collaboration that has been started, and developing even stronger links with you all in the future. We hope you find our newsletters informative, and we welcome any ideas that you may have that could be included in the coming year.

With good wishes to you all,

Your Mental Health Support Team

Did you know....

A recent study of 2,000 adults revealed that the average person will say "I'm fine" 14 times per week. Yet only 19% actually mean it.

There's a song that's been proven to reduce anxiety by 65%. It's called Weightless by Marconi Union and it was specifically designed to slow your heart rate, reduce blood pressure and lower cortisol level. It's so effective that it's dangerous to drive while listening to it, as it can make you drowsy!

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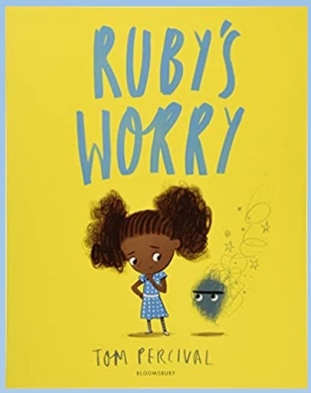
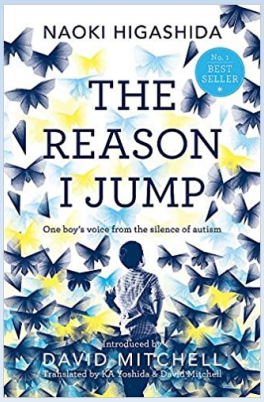
Book Recommendations

As a team we love to use books to help children and young people connect with their feelings. Here are some of our favourites:...



Ruby loves being Ruby. Until, one day, she finds a worry. At first it's not such a big worry, and that's all right, but then it starts to grow. It gets bigger and bigger every day and it makes Ruby sad. How can Ruby get rid of it and feel like herself again? A perceptive and poignant story that is a must-have for all children's bookshelves. From Tom Percival's bestselling Big Bright Feelings series, this is the perfect book for discussing childhood worries and anxieties, no matter how big or small they may be.



Written by Naoki Higashida when he was only thirteen, this remarkable book provides a rare insight into the often baffling behaviour of autistic children. Using a question and answer format, Naoki explains things like why he talks loudly or repeats the same questions, what causes him to have panic attacks, and why he likes to jump. He also shows the way he thinks and feels about his world - other people, nature, time and beauty, and himself. Abundantly proving that people with autism do possess imagination, humour and empathy, he also makes clear how badly they need our compassion, patience and understanding.

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Over the last year the MHST have worked with lots of children and young people individually. We have also been delivering some successful group interventions in schools...

A small group of Year 6 children have taken part in a group workshop based on psychoeducation. The group took part in multiple activities that looked at what anxiety is, when anxiety is and isn't helpful, things we can do when we are feeling anxious and who we can talk to.

We introduced the five ways to well-being to the group of children where they took part in an outdoor activity to demonstrate each aspect of the five areas.

The group work was put in place to offer children education on what mental health is and how mental health affects us all. The children were able to share ideas and communicate with each other about emotions, they also shared personal experiences which were valuable to the group. The children have asked to take part in another group workshop on anxiety and this has been identified to play a valuable role in supporting the transition from year 6 to 7.

A group of 30 Year 6 pupils participated in a resilience workshop during the Autumn term (2020). The workshop was comprised of 6 sessions which took place during PHSE class time, with the support of the class teacher and TAs. The sessions focussed on psychoeducation around resilience and encouraged pupils to consider their own "bounce-back-ability" – both how they have bounced back from difficulties in the past, and how they could apply their skills and abilities to do so in future. As the group were in Year 6, we also considered how resilience can be helpful for their upcoming SATS exams and transition to secondary school. Each session was developed to be interactive and engaging, encouraging pupils to support each other to recognise qualities which support their resilience through creative activities and group discussion. Feedback obtained from pupils showed they found the sessions helpful (98%) and enjoyable (99%), with all participants saying they would recommend the workshop to other children:

"[I have learnt] how to bounce back and realise your achievements even if they're small. [I would recommend these sessions] because these activities can help you in life and in the future."

"[I have learnt] to never give up and to care about others.

[I would recommend these sessions] because they help you be confident and optimistic."

"[I have learnt] to bounce back up from what makes you upset or worried. [I would recommend these sessions] because they really help you not to be worried about multiple things and to appreciate who you are."

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Training we recommend for Mental Health Leads:

MindEd- Lots of great online courses

www.minded.org.uk

Online resources for parents to access:

youngminds.org.uk

Participation and Collaboration

The MHST are really keen to develop our service in conjunction with children and young people, so if there are any school council meetings or young people that are interested in developing our service please let your EMHP know.

Please feel free to take (copy and paste) any of the information in this Newsletter to share in your own School Newsletter with parents/carers.

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