

How to Cope After Covid-19 and the Pandemic;

Dear Parents, Carers and Professionals involved in working with or supporting young people,

This has been an exceptionally challenging time for everyone, young and old alike. Whether you have been directly or indirectly affected by the Coronavirus pandemic and the social distancing/ social isolation lockdown measures, it has dominated our lives for many months.

Whilst many people are looking forward to 'normal life' resuming, this is also an uncertain period of transition which many are finding anxiety-provoking. We have put together this brief guide with some tips on 'How to Cope After Covid'. This is not an exhaustive guide and it is important to use this document in conjunction with any relevant government guidelines as well as any local/ specific guidance produced by your child's education provider.

This guide includes;

- 1) Looking after Yourself (Parents, Carers and Professionals)**
- 2) Looking After Young Children (Primary School)**
- 3) Looking After Teens (Secondary School)**
- 4) Looking After those with SEND**

We hope you find this useful,

Hampshire CAMHS

1) Looking After Yourself (parents, carers and professionals)

- You are human first and foremost; you have thoughts and feelings and you will have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic and social distancing/ isolation measures just like everyone else. Whether you have been affected directly or indirectly, it is important to acknowledge the impact it has had on you and how you are feeling. Talk to your friends, family and colleagues about how you are feeling and ask for help if you are struggling or worried about the reintegration back to 'normal' life and your professional role, especially if you look after, work with or support young people. There are resources below which offer support for both personal and professional issues.
- Take time to find your new routine, think about your 'to-dos' and priorities and how you want to address these. Making a plan and being organised can help when you feel you have to juggle multiple demands. It might be helpful to stagger resuming responsibilities and tasks if at all possible.
- Ensure you have regular opportunities for rest and downtime; time to yourself to engage in self-care activities. Be kind and compassionate towards yourself as you would another.
- Remember, it's ok to struggle or feel overwhelmed at times. This is an unprecedented time and we need to help one another to adjust and function. If you need support and help, please reach out.

Resources for Professionals;

Support for Education Professionals

Education Support Partnership UK; a UK charity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of teachers, teaching assistants, head teachers, lecturers and support staff in schools;

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Education Support Partnership Helpline Number; a free, confidential helpline is available 24hours a day 7days a week to education staff across England, Wales and Scotland (Primary, Secondary, Further or Higher Education); UK-wide: **08000 562 561** or Txt: **07909 341229**

Hampshire County Council Employee Support Line (available to school staff where the school has a service level agreement with the County Council for counselling provision); free, confidential and available to all staff and their immediate family members, 24 hour a day, 365 days a year; A confidential telephone advice and information line covering a wide range of issues including work, personal and family related: **0800 030 5182**

Support for NHS Staff

NHS Employers- Information and advice on mental health, physical health, financial wellbeing, domestic violence and carers for NHS staff; <https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/health-safety-and-wellbeing/support-available-for-nhs-staff>

National mental wellbeing support line; A free wellbeing support helpline **0300 131 7000** available from 7am – 11pm seven days a week, providing confidential listening from trained professionals and specialist advice, including coaching, bereavement care, mental health and financial help.

Mental Health At Work; <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/ourfrontline-health/>

Tea and Empathy NHS Facebook group; a national Facebook group which provides non-judgmental, informal listening and emotional support to colleagues across the **NHS** who were finding work difficult; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1215686978446877/>

For Social Care Staff

Mental Health At Work; <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/ourfrontline-socialcare/>

The Professional Association For Social Work and Social Workers; Offers training, courses and support for newly qualified support workers;

<https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/become-social-worker/support-newly-qualified-social-workers>

Hampshire County Council Occupational Health Service; Health Advice line; **023 8062 6600**, Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm or email; occupational.health@hants.gov.uk

General Support Services for Adults;

iTalk; a free and confidential psychological therapy service that accepts self-referral; <https://www.italk.org.uk/> or call **023 8038 3920** or email; info@italk.org.uk

NHS Mental Health Triage Service; call **111** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or visit www.111.nhs.uk and speak to the NHS Mental Health Triage Service.

Samaritans; Freephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; **116 123**

Mental Health At Work; <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/>

Anxiety UK; A Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm) or website; www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Men's Health Forum; Stress support for men by text, chat and email available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; www.menshealthforum.org.uk

Sane; Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers; SANEline: **0300 304 7000** (daily, 4.30pm to 10.30pm); www.sane.org.uk/support

Cruse Bereavement Care; **0808 808 1677** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm); www.cruse.org.uk

Family Lives; information, support and advice on all aspects of parenting, child development and home life; **0808 800 2222** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 3pm); www.familylives.org.uk

Relate; Relationship support; www.relate.org.uk

2) Looking After Young Children (Primary School)

- It is important not to assume how a child will react and cope; some will manage the reintegration and changes without too much difficulty, whereas others may struggle. This may not be immediate or obvious so it is important to acknowledge that for some children it may take weeks or months to readjust to the changes that have already happened and will continue to happen in their daily lives.
- Children may struggle to understand, express or communicate how they are feeling. You may notice changes in their behaviour or how they play and interact with others which may seem out of character. Children may experience changes in their sleeping, eating, levels of confidence and independence and some may display signs of struggling emotionally (e.g., being more anxious, withdrawn or clingy, hyperactive or irritable and aggressive). These changes are more likely to occur following a traumatic or significant change in life and are indicative of a child processing and adjusting to these experiences. With some adaptations and a supportive, consistent and empathic approach, these emotional needs can be met and the behaviour of concern managed and resolved without too much difficulty and without the need for specialist support or input. If you are worried and feel that difficulties persist or escalate, speak with your child's school, health visitor or school nurse in the first instance as well as accessing the resources below.
- If children do have questions or on-going worries, it is important to acknowledge, validate and discuss these using age appropriate language whilst also being thoughtful about the level of detail shared. In some instances there may not be answers to children's questions and adults may not be able to give assurances (e.g., we cannot say whether this will happen again or not). Validation of worries and helping children to develop coping strategies to deal with uncertainty and anxiety is an important life skill.
- It may be helpful to provide family based support if parents/ carers are struggling with their own emotional wellbeing and mental health or if they are struggling to support their child. There are a number of resources in this document which you can signpost parents and carers to.
- Communication is essential between parents/ carers and professionals working with or supporting a child. It will be important to be aware of how the child has coped during the pandemic and period of social distancing/ isolation particularly if they have experienced direct or indirect illness or bereavement. It will also be important to share whether a child has any on-going worries or difficulties that need to be addressed in a consistent way by caregivers. Regular meetings, telephone calls or using communication books which document how young person is coping and any other important or relevant information can be shared between adult caregivers may be helpful.

- Predictability and consistency are important during times which are unsettling. Where possible, it would be helpful to send in advance plans for reintegration back to school and ensure families understand these. Where plans remain subject to change or there is on-going uncertainty, it is helpful to be transparent about this and to have opportunities to discuss any impact on the child and family.
- Some children may be anxious about having fallen behind, that they have not done as much work as their peers or as expected or that there will be a lot of work to do when school re-starts in order to 'make up' for the time missed in school. Sharing proposed timetables and expectations of what children will be doing as well as providing clarity on what emotional support will be in place/ available for those who are struggling. It may be helpful to use visual aids and social stories to help children understand and adjust to new routines and activities.
- Where possible, some children (due to pre-existing needs or as a result of increased anxiety/emotional coping difficulties that have arisen during this time) may require a flexible or phased reintegration back to school. It will be important to have these conversations and agree plans as soon as possible so these can be communicated to the young person.
- Children may benefit from practice in getting themselves back into a routine before school reintegration starts; getting up early in the morning and getting ready for going to school and re-establishing a good bedtime routine so that when school re-starts this is less of an adjustment to make.
- Given children will have been exposed to differing levels of information and have varied experiences around the pandemic; it may be helpful to have general school guidance and rules around language and information that is shared in playgrounds or class group settings. It will be important for children to know what support structures are in place (i.e., who they can speak to if they are worried and how and when they can access this support).
- Regular use of praise, validation, empathy, kindness and compassion are invaluable in helping children feel contained and supported.

Resources;

Hampshire CAMHS; There is a help section for both parents/ carers and professionals with information, advice and resources (including videos, podcasts, downloads) on a number of mental health difficulties and life issues (including but not limited to; anxiety, low mood, trauma, behaviour or concern, bereavement and loss) that many young people experience;
www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk

Free video Workshop; CARE (Coping And Resilience Education) skills- a 45minute workshop for adults on understanding young people's emotions and how to support them with emotional resilience and mental health; <https://youtu.be/K4OGOHNwML0>

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Telephone Support; consultation provided by Educational Psychologists for staff in all settings, available each day from 9.30am -12.30pm and 1.00pm – 4.00pm, for any queries related to the emotional wellbeing of children and young people, their families and staff who know them.

- North (Basingstoke): 01252 814 835
- South (Havant): 02392 441 497
- East (Rushmoor): 01252 814 729
- West (Winchester): 01962 876 239
- Isle of Wight: 02392 441 497

Family Lives; information, support and advice on all aspects of parenting, child development and home life; **0808 800 2222** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 3pm); www.familylives.org.uk

Family Action; information, support and advice on all aspects of parenting, child development and home life; Freephone **0808 802 6666** (Monday- Friday 9am-9pm), Free Text: **07537 404 282**, Email; familyline@family-action.org.uk, Website, <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/early-years/>

Winston's Wish; Bereavement support for children; <https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/>

Simon Says; Bereavement support for children; <https://www.simonsays.org.uk/>

3) Looking After Teenagers (Secondary School)

- It is important not to assume how a young person will react and cope; some will manage the reintegration and changes without too much difficulty, whereas others may struggle. This may not be immediate or obvious so it is important to acknowledge that for some young people it may take weeks or months to readjust to the changes that have already happened and will continue to happen in their daily lives.
- Young people may struggle to understand, express or communicate how they are feeling. You may notice changes in their behaviour or how they interact with others which may seem out of character. Children may experience changes in their sleeping, eating, levels of confidence and independence and some may display signs of struggling emotionally (e.g., being more anxious, withdrawn or clingy, hyperactive or irritable and aggressive). These changes are more likely to occur following a traumatic or significant change in life and are indicative of a young person processing and adjusting to these experiences. With some adaptations and a supportive, consistent and empathic approach, these emotional needs can be met and the behaviour of concern managed and resolved without too much difficulty and without the need for specialist support or input. If you are worried and feel that difficulties persist or escalate, speak with your young person's school in the first instance as well as accessing the resources below.
- If young people do have questions or on-going worries, it is important to acknowledge, validate and discuss these using age appropriate language whilst also being thoughtful about the level of detail shared. In some instances there may not be answers to young people's questions and adults may not be able to give assurances (e.g., we cannot say whether this will happen again or not). Validation of worries and helping young people to develop coping strategies to deal with uncertainty and anxiety is an important life skill.
- It may be helpful to provide family based support if parents/ carers are struggling with their own emotional wellbeing and mental health or if they are struggling to support their young person. There are a number of resources in this document which you can signpost parents and carers to.
- Communication is essential between parents/ carers and professionals working with or supporting a young person. It will be important to be aware of how the young person has coped during the pandemic and period of social distancing/ isolation particularly if they have experienced direct or indirect illness or bereavement. It will also be important to share whether a young person has any on-going worries or difficulties that need to be addressed in a consistent way by caregivers. Regular meetings or telephone calls between adult caregivers may be helpful.

- Predictability and consistency are important during times which are unsettling. Where possible, it would be helpful to send in advance plans for reintegration back to school and ensure families understand these. Where plans remain subject to change or there is on-going uncertainty, it is helpful to be transparent about this and to have opportunities to discuss any impact on the young person and family.
- Some young people may be anxious about having fallen behind, that they have not done as much work as their peers or as expected or that there will be a lot of work to do when school re-starts in order to 'make up' for the time missed in school. Sharing proposed timetables and expectations of what young people will be doing as well as providing clarity on what emotional support will be in place/ available for those who are struggling.
- Where possible, some young people (due to pre-existing needs or as a result of increased anxiety/ emotional coping difficulties that have arisen during this time) may require a flexible or phased reintegration back to school. It will be important to have these conversations and agree plans as soon as possible so these can be communicated to the young person.
- Young people may benefit from practice in getting themselves back into a routine before school reintegration starts; getting up early in the morning and getting ready for going to school and re-establishing a good bedtime routine so that when school re-starts this is less of an adjustment to make.
- It will be important to acknowledge and validate young people's emotional responses to GCSE and A-Level exams cancelled. Where possible it would be helpful for each young person to have the opportunity to discuss the outcome and impact this has had on them.
- Regular use of praise, validation, empathy, kindness and compassion are invaluable in helping young people feel contained and supported.

Resources for Teens;

Hampshire CAMHS; <https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/>

There are help sections for young people, parents/ carers and professionals with information, advice and resources (including videos, podcasts, downloads) on a number of mental health difficulties and life issues (including but not limited to; anxiety, low mood, trauma, bereavement and loss, exam stress and friendship difficulties) that many young people experience; www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk

Written and produced by Hampshire CAMHS Innovation Team

Southern Health NHS- Chat Health; Advice for Teens (aged 11-19years old) in Hampshire; Text: 07507 332 160; Response time: Within 24 hours, 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays); <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/health/about-chathealth/>

NHS Mental Health Triage Service; 111 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or visit www.111.nhs.uk and speak to the NHS Mental Health Triage Service.

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger; This service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support, you can text YM to 85258

Government Exam Advice; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020>

4) Looking After Young People with SEND and Autistic Spectrum Condition

- It is important not to assume how a child/ young person will react and cope; some will manage the reintegration and changes without too much difficulty, whereas others may struggle. This may not be immediate or obvious so it is important to acknowledge that for some children it may take weeks or months to readjust to the changes that have already happened and will continue to happen in their daily lives.
- Children and young people may struggle to understand, express or communicate how they are feeling. You may notice changes in their behaviour or how they play and interact with others which may seem out of character. Children and young people may experience changes in their sleeping, eating, levels of confidence and daily functioning and some may display signs of struggling emotionally (e.g., being more anxious, withdrawn or clingy, hyperactive or irritable and aggressive). These changes are more likely to occur following a traumatic or significant change in life and are indicative of a young person processing and adjusting to these experiences. Young people may require additional use of communication aids such as communication systems (Widgits, Makaton, PECS), using visual guides with symbols, images and easy read text in order to aid two way communication.
- It may be helpful to pay particular attention to behaviour (especially if it's new or concerning) in order to better understand the function (purpose) it serves. Typical functions of behaviour include; 1) sensory seeking/ avoidance (this often has a self-soothing effect), 2) escape (avoidance or elimination of something aversive or unwanted, e.g., having to do something the person does not want to do), 3) care eliciting (seeking attention and care from others), 4) social avoidance and 5) tangible gain (attempts to get/ have something e.g., wanting something that has been denied or taken away or wanting something in response to boredom). To understand the function of behaviour, it can be helpful to consider what was happening before the behaviour occurred and what the outcome of the behaviour was. By understanding the purpose of why a young person may be engaging in a particular behaviour will allow you to consider other ways of meeting the young person's need which in turn may reduce the frequency or intensity of the behaviour being displayed.
- Ensure that young people have access to self-soothe aids (materials, activities) at all times. It may be helpful to schedule in dedicated self-soothe time into a young person's day/ week. It is important that caregivers (especially if they are new to the young person) are aware of triggers for anxiety or distress (not limited to adjustments following the pandemic) as well as de-escalation strategies/ techniques and self-soothe materials/ activities.
- If young people do have questions or on-going worries, it is important to acknowledge, validate and discuss these using appropriate language or communication aids (such as social stories) whilst also being thoughtful about the level of detail shared. In some instances there

may not be answers to young people's questions and adults may not be able to give assurances (e.g., we cannot say whether this will happen again or not) it will be important to share certainties that do exist (e.g., 'Washing our hands helps to keep us safe').

- Communication is essential between parents/ carers and professionals working with or supporting a young person. It will be important to be aware of how the young person has coped during the pandemic and period of social distancing/ isolation particularly if they have experienced direct or indirect illness or bereavement. It will also be important to share whether a young person has any on-going worries or difficulties that need to be addressed in a consistent way by caregivers. Regular meetings, telephone calls or using communication books which document how young person is coping and any other important or relevant information can be shared between adult caregivers may be helpful.
- Some young people may be enjoying being at home and having virtual contact with friends and peers, it might be helpful to think with care providers (health, social care and education) whether any of the adjustments made during the pandemic can be continued or integrated to better support the young person. (e.g., virtual appointments). There may be online/ virtual support groups or forums that parents or young people can join as a way of on-going support during the transition.
- It may be helpful to provide family based support if parents/ carers are struggling with their own emotional wellbeing and mental health or if they are struggling to support their child. There are a number of resources in this document which you can signpost parents and carers to.
- Predictability and consistency are important during times which are unsettling. Where possible, it would be helpful to send in advance plans for reintegration back to school and ensure families understand these. Where plans remain subject to change or there is on-going uncertainty, it is helpful to be transparent about this and to have opportunities to discuss any impact on the young person and family.
- Some young people may be anxious about school reintegration or find this change in routine unsettling. Sharing proposed timetables and expectations of what young people will be doing, explaining changes as well as providing clarity on what emotional support will be in place/ available for those who are struggling. It may be helpful to use visual aids and social stories to help young people understand and adjust to new routines and activities.
- Where possible, some young people (due to pre-existing needs or as a result of increased anxiety/ emotional coping difficulties that have arisen during this time) may require a flexible or phased reintegration back to school. It will be important to have these conversations and agree plans as soon as possible so these can be communicated to the young person.

- Young people may benefit from practice in getting themselves back into a routine before school reintegration starts; getting up early in the morning and getting ready for going to school and re-establishing a good bedtime routine so that when school re-starts this is less of an adjustment to make.
- Given young people will have been exposed to differing levels of information and have varied experiences around the pandemic; it may be helpful to have general school guidance and rules around language and information that is shared in playgrounds or class group settings. It will be important for young people to know what support structures are in place (i.e., who they can speak to if they are worried and how and when they can access this support).
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Simon Says; Bereavement support for children; <https://www.simonsays.org.uk/>

KIDS (Early Years Support); <https://www.kids.org.uk/early-years-support>

Council for Disabled Children; <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/>

Independent Parental Special Education Advice; <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>

Contact; <https://contact.org.uk/>

National Autistic Society; <https://www.autism.org.uk/>

Autism Hampshire; <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/>

Advisory Centre For Education (ACE); www.ace-ed.org.uk

Information, Advice and Support Services; www.iassnetwork.org.uk/find-your-iass/

SOS SEN; www.sossen.org.uk

