

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Telephone Support Line Now open to parents / carers

In line with government direction around social distancing and the impact of setting closures on access to our service, we want to reassure you that our service remains available for any consultation and telephone support. In addition to any contact between schools and their link EP, we are also offering a Telephone Support Line during this time which will be:

- A daily telephone support line 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.

From April 20 this Telephone Support Line will also be available for parents / carers to access for any queries relating to the emotional wellbeing of the children they are caring for. Please feel free to share this information with your school community.

Please phone the number below for your local area:

- 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

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Educational Psychology (HIEP) have put together a collection of resources which are available to support our communities in managing the worries and anxieties for ourselves and those we are caring for. This information has been sent out to all schools in a leaflet titled 'Supporting mental health and well being – Covid 19'. Further information is available through contacting the Telephone Support Line.

Talking with children & young people about coronavirus/COVID-19

In light of the current and developing situation and media coverage, it is likely that some children and young people may be concerned and anxious. This is reasonable, as it is probable that they have never experienced something like this before and do not have the experience to know what may happen.

Parents / carers and adults who work with children and young people can play an important role in maintaining a secure and familiar environment for them where they can share their questions and worries.

Some aspects to consider

- Maintain normal routines as far as is possible. Routines and familiar experiences are very reassuring.
- Be aware that some children and young people may be more irritable, emotionally volatile or distracted than would usually be the case - and be prepared to allow them to talk and ask questions.
- Be aware that worries and concerns can show themselves in lots of different ways; for example, through play, through relationships with other etc.
- Provide opportunities for them to share their thoughts and to support each other.

- Provide a clear message that nobody should be bullied or ignored if they have been associated with the virus. Be alert to any signs of name calling, exclusion or bullying.

Talking to children and young people

Make the conversation appropriate to the age and development of the child or young person. For older and more mature young people it may be helpful to guide them to the official websites and reliable news sources and share these with them to inform discussions.

- Choose a good time for a discussion with the child when they are happy to talk and when you are not having to immediately rush onto other things.
- Ask them to share what they know already. You will then know where to start the conversation.
- If they share worries or fears – show them that you understand how they are feeling. Don't try to dismiss or minimise their fears.
- Keep to the facts and keep the conversation positive. Tell them that doctors and scientists are working on the treatments, and talk about what they can do to have some control, for example focusing on good handwashing, using tissues etc.
- Don't be afraid of saying you don't know if there is a question that you don't know the answer to.
- Make it clear that they can talk further with you if they have more questions or need more reassurance – and check in with them after a while to see how things are going.
- Try to end the conversations with a comment, topic or activity that is calming and reassuring.

Useful links

For settings

Coronavirus and UK schools closures: Support and advice for schools and parents/carers from the British Psychological Society and Division of Child and Educational Psychology. This advice was produced in response to the UK Government's announcement of school closures as part of the response to Coronavirus. As the situation continues to develop, guidance may be updated as further details emerge:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Coronavirus%20and%20UK%20schools%20closures%20-%20support%20and%20advice.pdf>

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a children's mental health charity. They have a range of advice on their website, including advice for children, families, schools and colleges about how to support during periods of disruption:

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

Talking to children and young people about coronavirus / COVID-19

General information for adults talking to children:

- <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>
- <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-covid-19/>
- <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Talking to children with autism – advice for adults:

- <https://usevisualstrategies.com/autism-coronavirus-helping-students-understand/>

Stories and social stories to share with children:

- <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Childrens-story-about-coronavirus.pdf>
- [file:///C:/Users/cfcsepcw/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Coronavirus%20Social%20Story%20%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/cfcsepcw/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Coronavirus%20Social%20Story%20%20(1).pdf)
- <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf> - social story explaining coronavirus for children
- <https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf> - social story for younger children

For young people to access directly

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/looking-after-your-mental-health-while-self-isolating/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51861089>

Looking after your own mental health in relation to covid-19

- <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/covid-19-and-anxiety-part2/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51734855>

General guidance for supporting anxiety

Websites

Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. This NHS website offers advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a national children's mental health charity which offers advice for supporting mental health and wellbeing: <https://www.annafreud.org/selfcare/>

Support for mental health and wellbeing of children and young people: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Information about supporting young people with anxiety: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/anxiety-information/young-people-and-anxiety/>

Calm is a worldwide app for guided relaxation and mindfulness. They have created free access to support guided relaxation in response to the coronavirus situation https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=715072-free-mindfulness-resources-from-calm&utm_source=lists%2F51225-Ultimate-LoveLife-Makeover-Summit&simple_object_id=su_eWE1de2opeEQMZHT61XBFMVm

Apps

Headspace (mindfulness app) have launched a free section called *Weathering the storm*. This includes meditation, sleep and movement exercises.

ThinkNinja - an app specifically designed to educate 11-18 year olds about mental health, emotional wellbeing and to provide skills young people can use to build resilience and stay well.



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Smiling Mind – an app designed to support with meditation and mindfulness for children, families and schools. Their website (<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>) provides lots of information and guidance and the app provides guided relaxation / mindfulness sessions. They also have a YouTube channel with lots of informative videos as well as guided meditation sessions also: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSP_8_QEFYdi0gY2F3CXfA