

A tree diagram illustrating the components of a healthy community. The trunk is labeled "Healthy Community". The branches are labeled with various factors: "United in harmony", "Good governance", "Economic vitality", "Living in community", "Participate in decision making", "Social justice & inclusion", "Growing & thriving", "Learning with knowledge", "Peace, safety & security", and "Sustainable & healthy". The roots are labeled "Growth & development".

Introductions

Common worries for children when returning to school

What can we do to help?

Sleep Hygiene

External support over summer and school support for September

Questions



What will their worries or anxieties be?

1. Loss of routine
2. Loss of structure
3. Loss of friendship
4. Loss of opportunity
5. Loss of freedom

**ANXIETY
TRAUMA
BEREAVEMENT**

**DECLINE IN
MENTAL
HEALTH IN
CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE**



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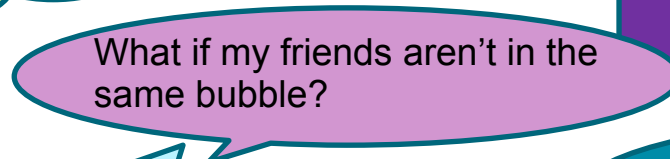
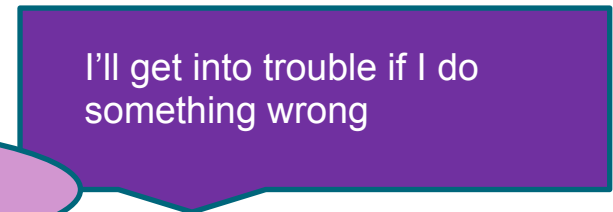
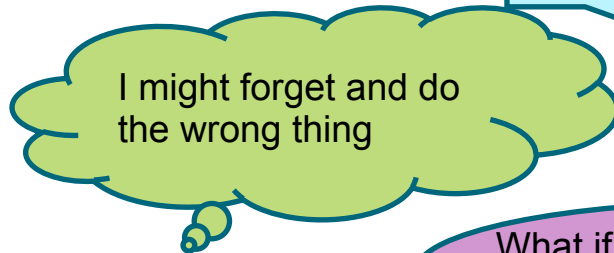
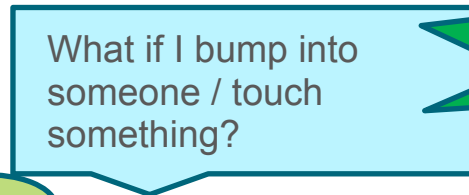


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Common worries for children returning to school after lockdown



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Anxious thoughts

- ❖ Over-estimate “danger”
- ❖ Underestimate ability to cope

- ❖ Avoid worrying situations , so you don't get the chance to learn if it's as bad as you think it will be or cope
- ❖ Seeking reassurance

Bodily sensations

Thoughts racing

Quicker thinking helps us to evaluate danger and make rapid decisions. It can be very difficult to concentrate on anything apart from the danger (or escape routes) when the fight or flight response is active

Changes to vision

Vision can become acute so that more attention can be paid to danger. You might notice 'tunnel vision', or vision becoming 'sharper'

Dry mouth

The mouth is part of the digestive system. Digestion shuts down during dangerous situations as energy is diverted towards the muscles

Heart beats faster

A faster heart beat feeds more blood to the muscles and enhances your ability to run away or fight

Nausea and 'butterflies' in the stomach

Blood is diverted away from the digestive system which can lead to feelings of nausea or 'butterflies'

Hands get cold

Blood vessels in the skin contract to force blood towards major muscle groups

Muscles tense

Muscles all over the body tense in order to get you ready to run away or fight. Muscles may also shake or tremble, particularly if you stay still, as a way of staying 'ready for action'

If we don't exercise (e.g. run away or fight) to use up the extra oxygen then we can quickly start to feel dizzy or lightheaded
Dizzy or lightheaded

Breathing becomes quicker and shallower

Quicker breathing takes in more oxygen to power the muscles. This makes the body more able to fight or run away

Adrenal glands release adrenaline

The adrenaline quickly signals other parts of the body to get ready to respond to danger

Bladder urgency

Muscles in the bladder sometimes relax in response to extreme stress

Palms become sweaty

When in danger the body sweats to keep cool. A cool machine is an efficient machine, so sweating makes the body more likely to survive a dangerous event



Anxious thinking

The
teacher
will be
cross with
me

If someone
bumps me I
will get
coronavirus

It will be awful

Anxiety = Overestimate chance of danger
Underestimate ability to cope

I won't
manage

I won't be able
to talk to
anyone

I can't do it



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Anxious Behaviour

Ask lots
of
question
s

Outburst
s

Clingy or
withdrawn

Say
difficult
statement
s

Avoidance

Hit others

Cry



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How to find out what my child is worried about?

Explore their worries by asking questions such as:

- ❖ “You seem worried, would you like a hug while you tell me about it?”
- ❖ “Is there something in particular that is bothering you?”
- ❖ “What do you think might happen?”
- ❖ “What seems particularly tricky?”

If they find it hard, give your best guess and normalise:

- ❖ “Lots of children going back to school might be thinking about....., is that something that you’ve been wondering about too?”

Listen carefully:

- ❖ Show your child you care by listening without interrupting
- ❖ Don’t rush to jump in with solutions or advice, try to just listen until your child feels you’ve understood
- ❖ They may not know why they are worried, that’s also ok



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- * Preparation – 5 key points**
- * Teaching your child how to relax and distract themselves**
- * Watching out for your own responses**



Preparation

1.

Worry checking

How realistic is the worry?

What is the evidence FOR this worry?

What is the evidence AGAINST the worry?

Then, ask what they would say to a friend who had this worry?



2. How would you cope?

If the thought is realistic, help them think about what they would do to manage?

3. Getting sleep back on track

After a long break from school, sleep routines and structure are important

4. Practising practical steps

Getting up and dressed in uniform

Practise the school walk / commute, see the school from the outside

Make links with the school if you feel you need more information about the new structure or the first days back

5. Stay calm and confident yourself

Children take their cues from adults

Don't let talk about school or the virus take over everything else



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us time
together

Good Sleep Hygiene

- 
- Rising early is better than going to bed early for getting adolescents back on track.
 - Go to bed and wake at roughly the same time.
 - No napping!
 - Relaxing but structured routine leading up to bedtime
 - Beds are for sleeping, not for watching TV, doing homework, eating etc
 - No screens an hour before bedtime.
 - Dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep
 - Being active can help you sleep better but remember to avoid vigorous activity near bedtime if it affects your sleep.



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Relaxation



Hands and Arms: *Squeeze a Lemon*

Pretend you have a whole lemon in each hand. Now squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out! Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Squeeze hard! Don't leave a single drop. (Hold for 10 seconds). Now relax and let the lemon drop from your hand. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed.



Shoulders and Neck: *Hide in Your Shell*

Now pretend you are a turtle. Try to pull your head into your shell. Try to pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold it tight! (Hold for 10 seconds). Okay, you can come out now. Feel your shoulders relax.

Breathing exercises



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Common parent responses to anxiety

Being drawn into giving too much reassurance

- Children can become reliant on reassurance and depend on adults saying what's ok to feel safe
 - Ask questions instead: try to help your child work out whether their worry is realistic or not for themselves.

Becoming over protective / colluding with avoidance

- Stepping in to protect children from all their fears means they never get the chance to learn they can cope and find out it's not as scary as they thought
 - Instead, notice and praise sensible or brave behaviour
 - Encourage them to face their fears in small, manageable steps



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Managing your own emotions

1. Children are sensitive to how parents feel and take their cues from you
2. Once you have decided your child is returning to school, try to project an air of confidence about it, even if you feel worried yourself
3. Try to remember that your worries are not necessarily your child's worries, they may not be feeling the same
4. Share with family / friends if you feel you need support with the transition back to school





Support over summer

The Education Well-being Practitioners (EWPs)

While schools are closed during the summer break, they are continuing to support young people virtually (over the phone or video call). They are offering the following interventions:

3 session intervention on sleep hygiene

3 session intervention on tackling the lack of energy and lack of motivation that many people are experiencing during social distancing

3 session intervention on managing worries

8 session intervention on understanding and managing anxiety

8 session intervention on understanding and managing low mood

Note: the EWP service cannot work with young people who are already accessing support via CAMHS.



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Merton Young People's Wellbeing Service

Does your daughter struggle with low mood or a lack of motivation?

Are they fearful or anxious about returning to school?

Has their sleep routine been affected by lockdown?

Do they feel worried or anxious overall?

If you've answered yes, an Education Wellbeing Practitioner may be able to help you.

What we do...

- Initial meeting to get to know you and hear more about your concerns.
- **Weekly** sessions with your daughter, currently offered by video calls. We typically offer up to 8 sessions.

How will it help?

- Learn to better understand worries / low mood
- Develop tools and coping strategies to address these challenges.
- Support to put new skills and strategies into practice.
Help increase resilience for coping with future difficulties.

Who we see...

Young People who are not already being seen in another service e.g. CAMHS who:

- ✓ Sometimes feel low (e.g. lower energy levels, loss of motivation, no longer enjoying the things they used to, change in sleep patterns, change in appetite, or feeling they want to be alone more than usual)
- ✓ Sometimes feel anxious (e.g. feeling anxious in social situations; feeling anxious about returning to school; feeling panicky; phobias of specific things e.g. lifts; excessive worrying e.g. about exams or friends and family).

What will it involve?

- Attending sessions, either virtually via video or in school.
- Learning new strategies and trying them out in their own time. *(They may need some support from a parent at times).*
- Sometimes it can be helpful for parents to join the sessions.
- If your daughter is 15 or under and self refers, we will typically inform you that they are taking part in this programme.

Next steps...

If you are interested in our service please speak to your daughter's Head of Year or the Mental Health Lead, Mrs Rachael Gilmore. Your daughter can refer themselves via the HOY or Mrs Rachael Gilmore.

InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk



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Supporting your Teenager with Lockdown Challenges & Returning to School

Online Parent Workshop

Is your teenager struggling with **motivation & sleep**?
Are they **worried** about **re-joining school** or **social situations**?
Would you like some **tips and strategies** to help you support your teenager?
If **YES**, please join us at one of the following times!

Dates & Times:

- Monday 17th August at 6:00PM
- Tuesday 18th August at 10:00AM
- Wednesday 19th August at 6:00PM
- Tuesday 25th August at 6:00PM
- Wednesday 26th August at 10:00AM
- Thursday 27th August at 6:00PM

The workshop will be approximately **45 minutes** followed by a **Q&A**.

Please email InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk to request a space.

Please state which secondary school your child attends & your preferred time slot from the above options. Shortly before the workshop you will be emailed the link.



www.swlstg.nhs.uk



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Becoming a Worry Ninja Workshop: Starting Secondary School

This is a **1 hour online workshop** designed for parents and their child focusing on the transition to secondary school. We aim to:

- Develop children and parent's understanding of anxiety
- Share strategies for managing anxious thoughts and feelings, especially relating to moving to secondary school

The workshop is offered by the SWLSTG Children and Young People's Education Wellbeing Practitioners and will be offered on-line.

Dates & Times:

- ➔ Wednesday 29th July 10-11AM and 5-6PM
- ➔ Thursday 30th July 4-5PM
- ➔ Monday 3rd August 11AM-12PM & 4-5PM
- ➔ Tuesday 4th August 10AM-11AM
- ➔ Monday 17th August 10AM-11AM
- ➔ Tuesday 18th August 6pm
- ➔ Wednesday 19th August 10AM-11AM



If you would like to attend the workshop with your child, please let us know by email and state your preference for date and time and which secondary school your child will be attending.

Email: InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk



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Off the Record Merton

Off the Record - www.talkofftherecord.org/merton/ offers online and telephone counselling support to any student at a Merton school.

Kooth

Kooth is an online counselling and emotional well-being service for children and young people aged 11-18.

www.kooth.com



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Parent support

NHS Emotional well-being: covid-19 resource hub

There are a range of useful resources to support your daughter's emotional well-being via this website: <https://swlondonccg.nhs.uk/your-health/mental-health/covid19-resource-hub/>

Good Thinking <https://www.good-thinking.uk/> For adults who live in London, offers support and links to apps for helping with anxiety, stress, low mood and sleep deprivation



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Support in school for September?



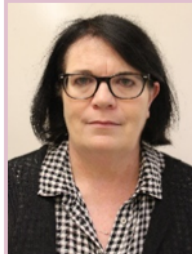
**Ms Michelle
Alexander
Assistant
Headteacher**

**Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



**Mrs Rachael
Gilmore
Mental Health
Lead & 6th Form**

**Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



**Ms Dena
Donaldson
Safeguarding
Officer
Health and
Wellbeing
Coordinator**



**Mrs Anna
Osarose Harrison
Safeguarding
Officer and
Safeguarding
Support
Assistant**



**Mrs Sarah
McCourt
Safeguarding
Officer
Year 7 & 8
Pastoral
Assistant**



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Support on offer

Can help with strategies for sleep, anxiety, low mood



**School Nurse
Elaine**



**Educational Welfare
Practitioners**



**Dominique Zakkour
Specialist
Practitioner in Mental
Health**



**Ms Dena
Donaldson
Well-being Co-
ordinator**



**Mrs Erica Nunann
School Counsellor**

Contact your daughter's Head of Year



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If you have any particular concerns you wish to discuss please contact

Michelle Alexander

Designated Safeguarding Lead

michelle.alexander@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk

Rachael Gilmore

Mental Health Lead

rachael.gilmore@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk



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QUESTIONS



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