

18th August

## This week's theme is Back to School Anxiety

Why are we focusing on this? As we have explored in previous newsletters, times of change can cause both positive and negative feelings. It is very common to feel anxious in times of change. Many of you will have been away from school for a while now, so the transition back might not feel easy. This is true for pupils, staff and parents!

### Children and Young People

#### *'I am anxious about going back to school'*

*You may feel anxious about a return to school, this is normal. You may also feel excited about seeing peers and a return to some normal routines. You may feel a mix of emotions. Have a look at [page 2](#) for ideas about how to make your transition back to school more manageable.*

[Check out our new Wellbeing Selfie Challenge starting next week on Page 6!](#)



### Staff

#### *'I am anxious about going back to school!'*

*School will likely look different when everyone returns and this will affect staff as much as pupils. Take a look at [page 5](#) for some resources and guidance on looking after pupils and your own wellbeing.*

### Parents

#### *'How can I support my young person in the return to school?'*

*We have put together some resources to support conversations with your young person about returning to school, see [page 4](#).*

Follow us on social media - @lancsmind  
Find more resources for Children and Young People, Adults and Parents on our website:  
[www.lancashiremind.org.uk](http://www.lancashiremind.org.uk)



# Pupils returning to school

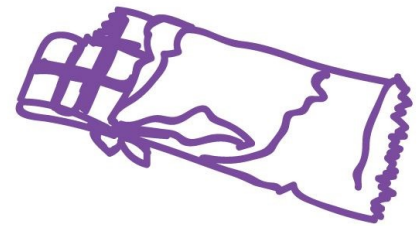
After a longer than usual period away, the return to a school routine may create a mix of emotions. You may feel anxious about how things will be; this is understandable and many of your peers will be feeling the same. In this newsletter we will give you some ideas of activities and resources that can help support you in times of change.

Everyone gets worries from time to time, but when you are experiencing anxiety it can become difficult to think about anything else, and it can interfere with your day to day life.

Some things you may feel when you are experiencing anxiety include:

- Finding it hard to concentrate on things
- Finding you are sleeping and eating more or less than usual
- Having lots of negative thoughts, or thinking that something bad might happen
- Feeling that you don't want to do things that you used to enjoy

Source: NHS, 2019



## Helpful resources

<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/anxiety-ocd-and-phobias/what-is-anxiety-5598.html>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/problems-at-school/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/coping-with-the-end-of-school-in-lockdown/>

## Worry journaling

When we are anxious, and have quite a lot of worries, it can be really helpful to write them down.

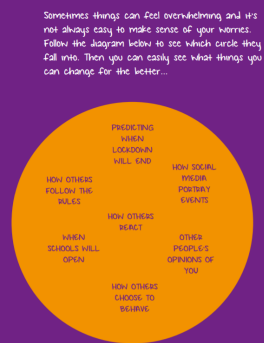
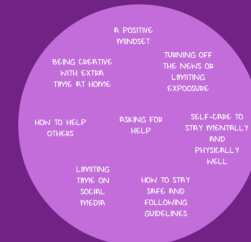
Writing things down helps get our worries out of our mind and onto paper. This can make it easier to put the worries aside and carry on with our day.

It can also help us to come to solutions about the things that are worrying us, or to make them seem a little less scary.

The most important thing to remember is that it is ok to talk about how you are feeling. You may want to talk to your parents, or your friends or a teacher. It is normal to have a mix of emotions or to sometimes feel confused. Talking and getting it out can really help.

Have a look at our Circles of Worry worksheet on our website - <https://bit.ly/3hQW13J>

## The Circles of Worry during Coronavirus



Sometimes things can feel overwhelming and it's not always easy to make sense of your worries. Follow the diagram below to see which circle they fall into. Then you can easily see what things you can change for the better...

# Mindfulness

In this weeks newsletter one of our wonderful Lancashire Mind volunteers, Sue, has provided us with a short introduction to mindfulness. Mindfulness is a technique that can be helpful when you are facing feelings of anxiety or stress.

## Mindfulness is...

...simply being in this moment and noticing it.  
Just here, just now.

## Mindfulness can help us...

...feel calmer and choose how best to respond to what's happening

... realise our thoughts are simply thoughts, not facts

...become kinder to ourselves and others

## We learn this by...

...taking time to *simply be* and being curious and what we can see, feel, hear, taste and smell

...noticing our thoughts and emotions with a sense of kindness

Sometimes our brain goes into overdrive, perhaps we feel stressed, fearful, angry, or maybe there just lots going on our mind, and it all gets very busy, everything gets stirred up and we can't see through it all, a bit like when we shake a snow globe.

Simply noticing our breathing brings us into the present moment, slows down the heart rate and calms the brain. This can help us see clearly, as though the snowflakes have settled. Does the stress go away? No, mindfulness doesn't stop stressful things in our lives but it can give us skills to settle our busy mind so we can make choices that are healthy for us!

## 1. Take 5 breaths exercise

The idea is to take 5 breaths as you trace around the hand with the little finger of the other hand. A full breath in as you trace up each finger and a full breath out as you trace down. Do you notice anything about your breathing afterwards?

## 2. Breathe, simply be and smile

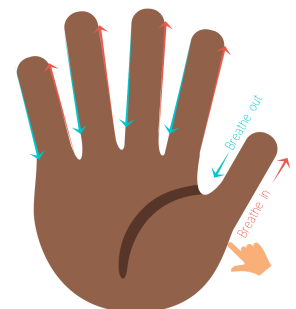
Sitting or standing, put the thumbs together with fingers of one hand resting on the other (looks a bit like a basket) and smile. Simply breathe normally, following each breath in and each breath out. No need to change the breath. Notice any thoughts and allow them to pass through your mind and float away like bubbles.

## 3. Take Notice of your senses

When you're outside, perhaps on a walk just notice everything you can feel - your feet on the ground, your clothes against your skin, air on your face, the temperature and so on; now what can you see, hear, smell and taste?

## 4. 5 finger gratitude exercise

Simply breathe. Hold one hand out and trace your fingers one at a time with the fore finger of the other hand, starting at the inner wrist up to the tip of the little finger. Hold as you get to each fingertip and think of something you're really grateful for. Continue with each finger, finishing at the outer wrist.



# Parents

If your young person is experiencing anxiety about the return to school, there are things you can do to support them and help make the transition more positive. You may also be feeling anxious yourself, so take a look at our website for resources to support your own wellbeing <https://www.lancashiremind.org.uk/pages/148-coronavirus-and-your-mental-health>

Why might a young person be worried about going back to school?

- They might be worried about school routines being different from what they are used to
- They might be worried about changes in friendships and how things will be when they haven't seen their peers for several months
- They may have grown used to their routine, and be happier schooling at home
- They may have difficulties with bullying or isolation at school
- They may be worried about the risks of going back to school

Source <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/away-from-home/at-school/#>

What if lockdown has been a relief for my family? BBC Bitesize

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zvy9vwx?fbclid=IwAR0XyQ0Tw8QDBAuoSMHNzwF2FNZmEbpPtMJLkVecFC2-aldMJ7k8k4ClqBA>

Tips for supporting your young person

- Have open conversations, let them talk about what is worrying them and encourage them to come to you if they are feeling anxious
- Remind them about the ways they can help keep themselves safe such as washing hands, and the things school will be putting in place to look after them
- Young Minds recommend a 'Family Feedback' time, when all members of the family share positive things and worries from the day
- Plan some fun things you can do around the return to school, so that they have other activities to focus on
- Remind them that they are not alone in feeling anxious

Sources:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/supporting-a-child-returning-to-school-after-lockdown/>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-children-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return>

Online Wellbeing Groups <https://lancashirewomen.org/get-support/mental-health/wellbeing-courses>

## School staff

The transition back to school will affect everyone in the school community, and as a member of staff you may have many of your own anxieties to process.

### Your own wellbeing

You may be experiencing your own anxiety about a return to school, or changes in your wellbeing due to this period of lockdown.

Education Support have put together advice for teachers to help work through stress and anxiety that they may be experiencing.

- Take a look at this video, which outlines seven strategies to manage anxiety

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-support/anxious>



Education Support also offer a support line for those working in

education:

UK-wide: 08000 562 561  
day or night

Txt: 07909 341229  
(answered within 24  
hours)

### Pupil wellbeing

The Mental Health Foundation have put together a guide for supporting pupils in their return to school. Key points include:

- Pupils will have had very different experiences of lockdown. Have an open mind about what is best for them.
- Remember you are part of a team, in the wider community, not just your school. Draw on necessary support.
- Don't underestimate the importance of just letting pupils talk.

See <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown> for more tips.

Place2be have put together a series of assemblies and classroom activities to support the return to school

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/media/uvzkzysp/secondary-school-return-to-school.pdf>

### Resources

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/updates/education-and-school/teachers-back-to-school.aspx>

<https://www.tes.com/news/will-fear-coronavirus-affect-your-teaching>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/twinkl-partnerships/mind-partnerships>

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/11727/managing-transition-back-to-school-jun2020.pdf>

# Wellbeing Selfie Challenge!

This summer we are challenging families and young people across Lancashire to take part in the Wellbeing Selfie Challenge.

## When is it?

Starting on **Monday 23rd August**, we are aiming for over 1,000 children, young people and their families from across the county to take part in our 10 day challenge!



## What is it?

Every day during the challenge a different theme will be announced on social media alongside a tip about wellbeing that relates to that theme.

For example, you may be asked to post a selfie full of colour. Life is bright and full of colours, but sometimes poor mental health and wellbeing makes the colours harder to see. It's ok if some days the world does not seem as bright as others. If you have days like this talk to someone who can help.

All you need to do is capture a selfie in that location and share it using the hashtag **#LancashireMindWellbeing**

[Click here to register and get a free info pack!](#)

As always, Lancashire Mind want you to stay safe and so request that all those taking part in the Wellbeing Selfie Challenge are aware of their surroundings at all times and do not attempt to take any selfies in any locations or situations which could result in injury or harm to themselves or others. Please put your safety and the safety of all others first.

## Links to helpful information & resources

### General Government Guidance and Updates

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

### NHS Guidance

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/children-and-young-peoples-services/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

### Lancashire Mind Resources

<https://www.lancashiremind.org.uk/pages/148-coronavirus-and-your-mental-health>

### Mind.org Resources

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse77625>

### Other Mental Health Resources

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/health-and-other-forms-of-anxiety-and-coronavirus/>

<https://www.healthyyoungminds.scot.nhs.uk/information/children-and-young-people>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>

### Other Coronavirus Resources for Parents and Carers of Young People

<https://nursedottybooks.com/dave-the-dog-is-worried-about-coronavirus-2/>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

<https://www.abc.net.au/life/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-coronavirus-covid-19/12084666>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/coronavirus.html>

### Crisis Help and Helplines

If the person is in a crisis and in need of medical attention, you should call 999 and ask for an ambulance to take them to A&E.

If the person is presenting as a danger to themselves or members of the public you should contact the Police on 999.

Samaritans on free phone 116 123 (open 24 hours a day every day of the year)

| <i>Local area</i>                     | <i>9am-5pm</i> | <i>5pm-9am</i>               |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Blackburn                             | 01254 226430   | 01254 226074                 |
| Blackpool                             | 01253 951225   | 01253 956280                 |
| Chorley & South Ribble                | 01772 676173   | 01772 773525                 |
| Hyndburn, Rossendale & Ribbles Valley | 01254 226006   | 01254 612640                 |
| Lancaster & Morecambe                 | 01524 550550   | 01524 550198 or 01524 550199 |
| Pendle & Burnley                      | 01282 628455   | 01282 657222                 |
| Preston                               | 01772 647024   | 01772 773433                 |
| South Cumbria                         | 0300 024 7247  | 0300 024 7247                |
| West Lancashire                       | 01695 684161   | 01695 684356                 |