

NEWSLETTER

Mental Health Support Team MHST



ANTI BULLYING WEEK 2021

Anti-Bullying Week is coordinated In England and Wales by the Anti-Bullying Alliance and takes place from 15 to 19 November 2021 and it has the theme **One Kind Word**.

THIS MONTHS THEME: ANTI BULLYING

MEET THE TEAM



Hey my name is Courtney - I am an Education Mental Health Practitioner. I support young people who are having difficulties such as anxiety and low mood. One thing I love about my job is seeing young people make positive changes in their lives which helps them to overcome their problems. In my spare time I like to visit new places, eat out but also love to be at home having a Netflix day watching new series!

YOUNG PERSONS GROUP

One of our lovely young people from our Participation Group would like to share a coping strategy he has used in the past to help his manage thoughts of self harm:

"Whenever I was in a bad place or felt the need to self harm I would draw a simple drawing of a butterfly (and if I was up to it I would add colour) Eventually I filled books with butterflies and it reminded me that such a horrible place in my life could become something beautiful".

Please find information and support on the last page



Our Young People are very excited to have been invited by PAPYRUS to take part in developing some promotional material around the topic of HOPE. The young people will be meeting on Thursday the 2nd December 4pm at Blackburn Youth Zone - if you know of any young person who would like to be involved in this project or would be interested in joining our Participation Group please email:
lisa-marie.naylor@elht.nhs.uk.



Bullying is a distressing situation for anybody to face, especially children. Bullying can exist in face to face situations, or online. Online bullying is referred to as cyber-bullying. At the moment, there is no legal definition of bullying in UK law. However, the Department of Education defines bullying as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that is intended to hurt or harm another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. The rapid development of new technologies has provided a new medium for bullying, in the form of cyberbullying through social media, gaming, and text messages."

According to the Anti-Bullying Alliance, 40% of children and young people have experienced bullying in the previous 12 months. Children and young people reported name calling as the most common form of bullying, including via text and email. The second most common form of bullying is exclusion from social groups. A quarter of children with special educational needs have experienced violence, either real or threatened.

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

The effects of bullying have been well researched. Bullying is known to effect the mental health and wellbeing of those affected.



At its worst, bullying has driven children and young people to self-harm and even suicide. Children who are bullied:

- may develop mental health problems like depression and anxiety
- have fewer friendships
- are not accepted by their peers
- are wary and suspicious of others
- have problems adjusting to school, and do not progress as well.

All children who are affected by bullying can suffer harm – whether they are bullied, they bully others or they witness bullying. (NSPCC, 2021)

WHO IS MORE AT RISK OF BULLYING?

Bullying can happen for any number of reasons, but if a child is seen as weaker or different in some way they can be more at risk. This might be because of their physical appearance, lack of social skills, race, culture, gender identity, sexuality, disability, family situation (i.e. growing up in care or parents divorcing), religion or beliefs. It could also be because a child is shy or introverted, appears anxious, vulnerable or has low self-esteem.

When bullying takes place, there is often a significant, perceived power imbalance between the child involved in bullying, and the child who is bullied.

Research conducted by the NHS in England, found that young people with a mental health condition are nearly twice as likely to be bullied, and more than twice as likely to be cyberbullied. Furthermore, children and young people who are more likely to be bullied may include those with additional learning needs, or with a disability or long-term illness, as well as those who live in deprived areas or one-parent households (Anna Freud, 2021).

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD THROUGH BULLYING

Spotting the signs your child is being bullied may be difficult and not always obvious. There are many different reasons a child will not speak about bullying; these can range from being embarrassed or feeling shame to thinking it will not make a difference. All children are different so spotting signs may be challenging, below are some signs which may signify your child is being bullied:

- Wanting to stay off school regularly
- Seem low/anxious
- Have unexplained physical injuries.
- Struggling with friendships
- Become socially withdrawn
- Show signs of emotional distress, for example becoming tearful or angry outbursts at home.
- Display bullying behaviour towards others, including younger siblings

If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying, starting a conversation with them is the first step to understanding what they are experiencing. By explaining what bullying is and how it makes people feel, is a good way to normalise what they are experiencing and validate how they are feeling. When they open up to you, listen and validate their emotions and reassure them speaking about it is the first step to keeping them safe. Explain bullying is not their fault, nor are they to blame and they have the family support to help them through this. Try participating in activities which will make them feel good and build their self-esteem. Connecting through activities and time spent together will help them to feel safe and supported. Discuss with them what they would like to happen, try and involve them at each stage when seeking solutions and support for bullying to be resolved. Keep a diary of incidents which you can provide to school or the organisation where the bullying is taking place. For more information and support, please see the links on the last page.

BULLYING AND SCHOOLS

Schools have a legal obligation to keep children in their care safe, this can include incidents which have occurred outside of the school setting. For example, cyberbullying. When approaching schools for support, if your child is a victim of bullying, it may be helpful to view their Anti-Bullying Policy. This will usually be found on their website or a member of school staff will provide a copy on request. The policy will outline how the school aims to manage instances of bullying. Another helpful document is Keep Children Safe in Education (2021), this is statutory guidance outlined by the government for schools to follow.

Please find the link here:



Signposting

Double click any of the images to take you to the website for more information



Parent Participation Group (Secondary Schools in BwD).

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday 9th December from 6pm -7pm** (Via Zoom)

The aim of the meeting is to discuss how we can best engage parents/carers in developing the MHST and the developments of a Parent Support Group. We greatly value your feedback and support so are hopeful that you will join us!

Whilst we are opening up the Parent Support Group for **Parent/Carers of secondary Students in BwD** initially there are plans to open this up to other areas and we will keep you up to date on any developments

Meeting ID: 886 0343 2539
Passcode: 821753



Safe | Personal | Effective