

## NEWSLETTER

# Mental Health Support Team MHST

## THIS MONTHS THEME: COPING AT CHRISTMAS

Hello everyone and welcome to our Christmas edition of the MHST Newsletter. We hope you are all well and keeping safe. This month we thought it would be helpful to focus on support and wellbeing services for over the Christmas period. For many of us Christmas is an exciting time but it can also be a stressful time for various reasons so we would like to offer some advice for looking after your own wellbeing as well as that of your young people. We have included some free family friendly ideas and as always some signposting on the last page. From all of us at the Mental Health Support Team we wish you ALL a fantastic Christmas filled with love and laughter xx

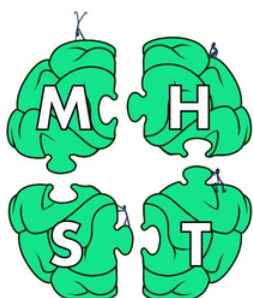
## MEET THE TEAM



Hi, my name is Rebecca. I am a Senior Mental Health Practitioner in the Blackburn with Darwen primary school MHST. I've been helping young people overcome their worries and low mood for nearly 20 years!!!! I love animals and nature. I have 2 dogs and 5 tortoises but would be at my happiest if I could live on a nature reserve. I love to care for the planet and think we should all try our best to give nature a chance.

## YOUNG PERSONS GROUP

One of our fabulous young people - Charlotte recently designed a draft logo for the Mental Health Support Team and we are in the process of having it digitally made -here is a sneak preview! We hope you like it. The young people are also filming with the charity POPYRUS this month and we hope to be able to share the video with you soon.



Mental Health Support Team



## COPING AT CHRISTMAS



Christmas is often seen as a wonderful, festive time of year. Although, for some it can be a challenging and stressful time, for many reasons. There are messages we receive from society and marketing which convey what a 'perfect' Christmas looks like, but is rarely people's experience of Christmas. These ideals that we are subjected to through T.V. adverts, social media posts, and films can often compound our daily life stressors making Christmas extra difficult for some.

### REASONS WHY CHRISTMAS CAN BE DIFFICULT

This list is not exhaustive as everyone's situation is different. These are just some examples of what people may experience:

- Difficult family relationships or estrangement from family members.
- Financial difficulties.
- Bereavement.
- Health problems
- Family members in hospital which may mean you have to spend Christmas apart.
- Further demands on your time such as socialising, children's events, and preparation.
- Pressure to give your children/family gifts costing more than you can afford.

### CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

The Christmas break can be an ideal opportunity to spend time as a family. Simple activities can help boost wellbeing and elicit a sense of closeness. Below are some free and simple activities to try with your family, if you do not celebrate Christmas, you can still participate or the theme altered.

#### CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Take a walk around your local area in the evening to spot beautiful, festive houses.



#### SALTDOUGH DECORATIONS

Enjoy making simple saltdough Christmas decorations, garlands, gift tags and more! Click on the image for the recipe



#### WATCH CHRISTMAS FILMS

If you can, make a hot chocolate station first - little pots of cream, marshmallows, sprinkles, flakes. Then sit together and enjoy a festive film with a special hot chocolate.



# MANAGING WORRIES AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can bring extra pressure and worries. Below is a worry tree to help spot and manage those worries. Sometimes we can feel stressed and have the physical feelings of anxiety, but not know why.

Physical feeling of stress and anxiety may feel like:

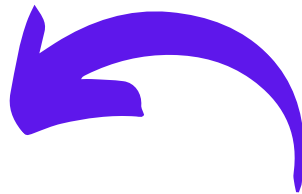
- Headache
- Feel sick
- Shaky
- Feel hot or cold
- Notice our heart beating faster, or quick breathing.



We may notice these physical sensations but may not be able to pinpoint what our worries are. To start, try and notice specific worries. It may help to spend time writing these down. The next step is to think about what this worry is really about? Also, can I do something about it? At times, the answer to the previous question may be no. If this is the case, taking time to relax through mindfulness or other self-care strategies. These strategies can also help let worries go. Worries can often be "what if." thoughts, where we worry about what could happen. The worry tree separates **hypothetical** (what if) worries from **real** worries. If you have identified real worries, for example, worrying about lack of time to have anything finished, problem solving is an action you can take to help manage the pressure and help let the worry go. This worry tree may also be useful if your child is experiencing worries.

# Signposting

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



## Free Festive Activities!



### 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

