



STUDENT WELLBEING MATTERS



Ripley St Thomas CE Academy Student Wellbeing Newsletter
24 February 2021



WHERE THERE IS LIGHT THERE IS HOPE



Welcome to another edition of the Ripley Student Wellbeing Matters newsletter with lots more positive ideas and information to help support everyone's mental wellbeing and health.

With the recent government announcement that pupils will return to school on 8th March, along with a roadmap for how and when we will exit lockdown, the future looks more promising.

In addition to this, the clocks go forward on 28th March, signalling the start of British Summer Time, bringing more daylight to our evenings which can dramatically improve our mood and wellbeing.

If you need to contact us please email:
wellbeingmatters@ripley.lancs.sch.uk

IN THIS EDITION....

..there is some excellent information and advice about mindfulness in a busy world along with some supporting articles aimed at helping young people cope with a range of personal, social and school issues.

In celebration of World Book Day, the newsletter also features a fantastic article from the English Department on the value of reading and how reading for pleasure can benefit your education, social and cognitive development, your wellbeing, and your mental health.

This is supported by information from Ripley Libraries on The Shelf Help collection of books, which help teenagers turn the page on mental health and where you can go to find your next book.

AND THERE'S MORE....

There is informative and practical information on the Lancashire MIND Wellbeing Passport, designed to help young people to share information about their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The practical tool can be used to help young people feel more confident about many aspects of their lives.

Finally, there is our regular reminder of who you can contact at school for a Drop-In or Support Session and a **Plan Your Weekly Wellbeing** practical guide to help build mental strength through a range of daily activities. Why not give them a go and try some of the suggestions?



MINDFULNESS IN A BUSY WORLD

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?



Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves making a special effort to notice what's happening in the present moment (in your mind, body and surroundings) - without judging anything. It has roots in Buddhism and meditation, but you don't have to be spiritual, or have any particular beliefs, to try it. Mindfulness is a skill. It requires work like any therapy and practise like any skill.

HOW DOES MINDFULNESS WORK?

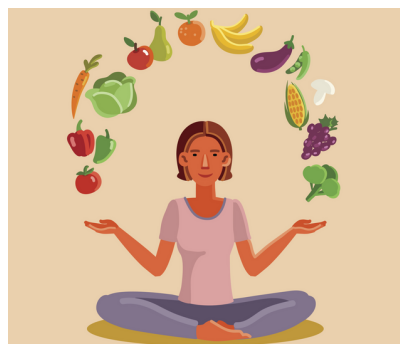
The way we think (and what we think about) can affect how we feel and act. For example, if you think or worry a lot about upsetting past or future events, you might often feel sad or anxious. The theory behind mindfulness is that by using various techniques to bring your attention to the present (usually focusing on your body and your breathing), you can:



- notice how thoughts come and go in your mind. You may learn that they don't have to define who you are, or your experience of the world, and you can let go of them.
- notice what your body is telling you. For example, tension or anxiety can often be felt in your body (such as in a fast heartbeat, tense muscles or shallow breathing).
- create space between you and your thoughts, so you can react more calmly.

WHAT MINDFULNESS EXERCISES CAN I TRY TODAY?

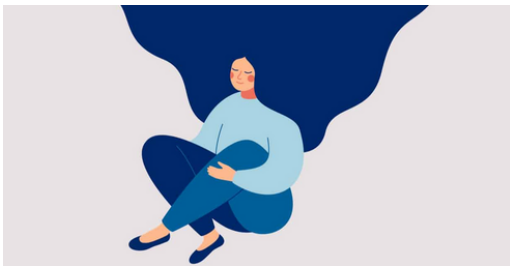
Here are a few exercises you could try. You don't need any special equipment:



Mindful eating. This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, when drinking a cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate you could focus on how hot and liquid it feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.

Mindful moving, walking or running. Notice the feeling of your body moving. You might notice the breeze against your skin, the feeling of your feet or hands against different textures on the ground or nearby surfaces, and the different smells that are around you.





Body scan. This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of the body, starting from the top of your head moving all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.

Mindful colouring and drawing. Focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper, rather than trying to draw something in particular. You could use a mindfulness colouring book or download [mindfulness colouring images](#).



Mindful meditation. This involves sitting quietly and focusing on your breathing, your thoughts, sensations in your body and the things you can hear around you. Try to bring your focus back to the present if your mind starts to wander. Many people also find that yoga helps them to concentrate on their breathing and focus on the present moment. See our page on types of alternative and complementary therapy for more information on meditation and yoga.

DIFFERENT THINGS WORK FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE, SO IF YOU DON'T FIND ONE EXERCISE USEFUL, TRY ANOTHER.

APPS TO HELP WITH MINDFULNESS

Below are some apps designed for teenagers. Click on the pictures to take you to their websites.



Mindful Gnats is an app designed to teach young people simple mindfulness and relaxation skills. It can be used to help mindfulness practice when playing the Mindful Gnats desktop game. These skills can help to reduce stress, and improve awareness of your body, mind and world.

Smiling Mind is modern meditation for young people from 7 years up. It is a free web and App-based program, designed to help bring balance to young lives. Smiling Mind was created in Australia and is aimed at helping young people de-stress and stay calm.



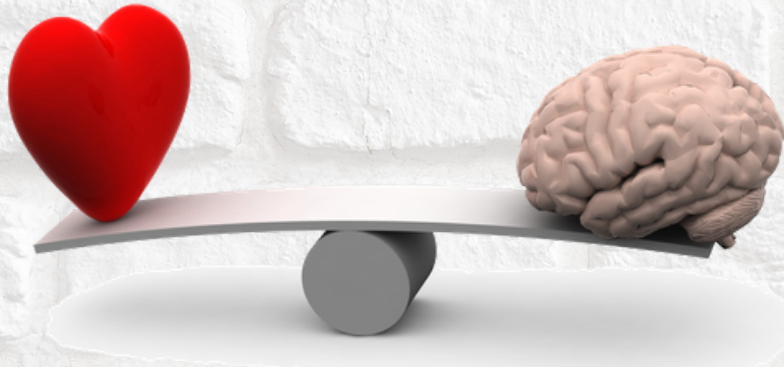
Learn to meditate and be more mindful with **MyLife Meditation**, formerly known as Stop, Breathe & Think. MyLife Meditation is an award-winning meditation and mindfulness app personalized to how you feel. Develop simple habits and learn to maintain perspective so you can get to a better place, in just a few minutes a day.



Our brains are made for love



We all have to manage our personal mental health and physical health. Being mentally healthy means that we feel good about ourselves. We make and maintain positive relationships with other people. We take responsibility to embrace and manage the full range of emotions that comes through journeying life! Author Caroline Leaf says, “Our brains are made for love. Not fear. Not performance. Not aggression. But LOVE”.



With this in mind, it is important that we are encouraged and supported to look after our mental health every day.

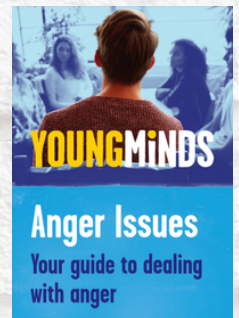
Click on the links below for resources that you might find particularly useful:



[Coping with pressure at school](#)



[Social Media and Teenagers](#)



[Dealing with anger](#)



[Eating problems and disorders](#)



[Looking after yourself during your GCSEs](#)





WORLD BOOK DAY!

BOOKS
aren't just made of
WORDS...
they're also filled with
PLACES
to visit and
PEOPLE
to meet.



"THE MORE YOU READ, THE MORE THINGS YOU'LL KNOW. THE MORE YOU LEARN, THE MORE PLACES YOU'LL GO." DR SEUSS.

Ever read Cat in the Hat? What are you reading now?

It's **World Book Day on the 4th March**. But I bet many of you are thinking, ok, so what? We live in a digital era, students are digital natives ... surfing the internet, socialising virtually, tweeting, tiktok-ing, instagramming, streaming ... your brains, eyes and thumbs navigating between keyboards and screens. All this communication and sharing, but we're isolated, limited with human interaction, disconnected. We can interface, faceless, between platforms. The only platform I knew when I was a kid, was that at the train station!

But what if I told you World Book Day was a way to **reconnect**. As it, globally, celebrates novels, stories, fiction and non-fiction, authors and writers, we are reminded of the significance and **value of reading**. We can reconnect with people, reconnect with ideas, reconnect with characters. Reading allows us to be transported from our own world to another. From those pages of a book, we can immerse ourselves in the lives of fictional characters and learn about a culture, a narrative entirely different from our own. We can also learn new words and phrases, experience a range of emotions, and acquire skills and knowledge. The importance of reading for children, or for anyone actually, cannot be underestimated. Reading for pleasure can benefit your education, social and cognitive development, your wellbeing, and your mental health.

There is strong evidence that reading for pleasure can increase **empathy**, improve **relationships** with others, **reduce** the symptoms of **depression** and improve **wellbeing** throughout life.

HOW?

Well, in reading, we become aware of deeper understandings of our own world, as well as others, with gives us context, background knowledge. This acquired knowledge, in turn, allows us to make sense of what we see, hear, and read, which supports our cognitive development. Additionally, reading presents a **story for us to be part of**; we develop empathy as we experience the lives of other characters and can identify with how they are feeling. We can translate these experiences in real life, gaining a greater understanding of emotions, which helps us to understand our own emotions and those of others.

But it's so much more effort to settle into a book – and also, it's not cool! Ok, I hear you; yes, it is more effort for our brains to process written, stationary material than a vibrant electronic screen. Society moves at a fast pace these days, so to slow down and take time out to read sounds strange; we are always constantly on the move. Then **go audio** – tune in to a celebrity narrating your favourite crime story, recounting your chosen adventure, divulging that suspenseful thriller. Yes, let's go **digital with our reading**, and access novels on totally new platforms.

There's a **whole world** out there; in fact there are several worlds, and different times; magic, adventure ... life. If you could just open a book. The benefits are there, **but you need to believe**.

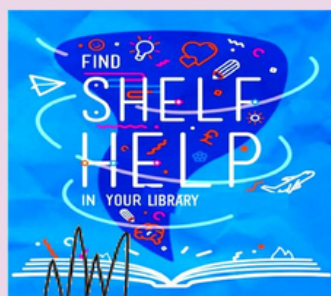
AS ROALD DAHL SAID, "AND ABOVE ALL, WATCH WITH GLITTERING EYES THE WHOLE WORLD AROUND YOU BECAUSE THE GREATEST SECRETS ARE ALWAYS HIDDEN IN THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACES. THOSE WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC WILL NEVER FIND IT."

So, go on, read a book, listen to story, and make it a habit.

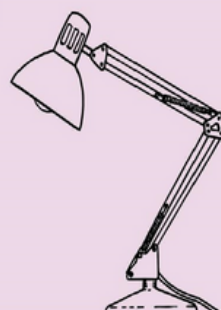
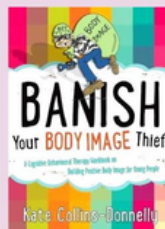
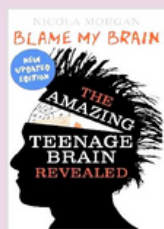




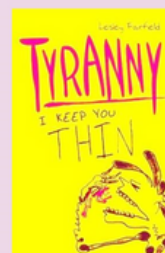
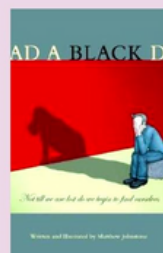
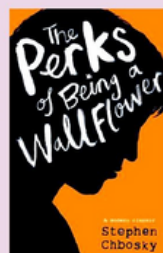
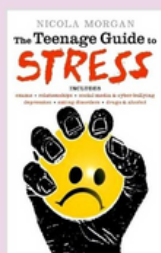
FROM THE READING ROOM



Shelf Help, the books helping teenagers turn the page on mental health

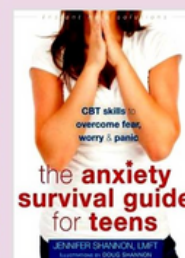
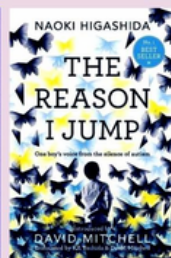
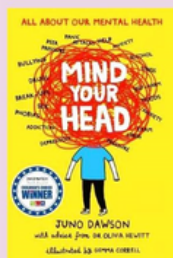


The **Shelf Help** collection of books by the Reading Agency were chosen by 13-18 year olds and consist of a unique catalogue of **35 books endorsed by health professionals** as well as people who have lived experience of the conditions and topics covered.



The books provide **information, support and advice** on a wide range of **mental health issues** for young people such as with anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm, and difficult life pressures, like bullying and exams.

For further information email: reading@ripley.lancs.sch.uk or visit The Reading Agency's website: <https://readingagency.org.uk/>



To view the full list of books which are available in our libraries:

Ripley Website > Curriculum > Libraries > Search the catalogue > enter Shelf Help

the reading room...



FROM THE READING ROOM

BOOKS
aren't just made of
WORDS...
they're also filled with
PLACES
to visit and
PEOPLE
to meet.



WHERE TO FIND YOUR NEXT READ...



**OPEN
LIBRARY**

Both our libraries, The Reading Room and The JCL, offer a Click & Collect request service. Email your request (using your school email) to reading@ripley.lancs.sch.uk and the librarians will then arrange for the books you have ordered to be delivered to your form. You can also ask the libraries to order books that are not currently in stock.



Audible: listen to a range of audiobooks online with Amazon's Audible. Please note: subscriptions do apply.



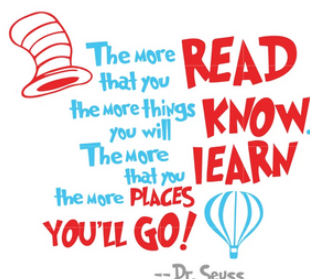
BBC Sounds Audiobooks: the BBC Sounds podcast has a huge range of free audiobooks available for you to listen to whenever and wherever you want. Some of our favourites include David Attenborough's *Adventures of a Young Naturalist*, Barack Obama's *A Promised Land* and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.



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Follow our libraries' blog on the Ripley website and Instagram page [ripleyreads](#) for your next inspiration about what book to pick up and read!



-- Dr. Seuss



What is it?

The Wellbeing Passport is a tool for young people and their supporters to help them to share information about their mental health and emotional wellbeing. It is something that can be used in many situations and settings, where it is important for young people to feel confident to tell their story.

The Wellbeing Passport is a small booklet with different pages that hold different pieces of information about the young person. The card is smaller and can hold one or 2 pieces of important information that can be shown to someone in an emergency. A young person can fill in their own Wellbeing Passport and card with guidance from their supporters if they need it.

There is also a downloadable guidance document which provides examples of the kinds of information that can be added in each section.

The guide for parents, carers and professional can be downloaded [here](#).

Where did it come from?

The Wellbeing Passport and card were created by, and for, young people and their supporters in Lancashire and south Cumbria, as part of the transformation of children and young people's mental health services. Lancashire Mind has worked closely with young people, parents, carers and practitioners from a range of services, to gather opinions, suggestions and feedback on the use of a health passport for mental health and emotional wellbeing for young people.

www.wellbeingpassport.co.uk





WELLBEING PASSPORT

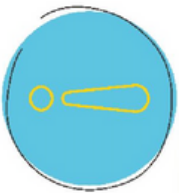
Who is it for?

The Wellbeing Passport and card are for any young person who feels they have mental health challenges. It doesn't matter if a young person is not working with any mental health services, or if they don't have a diagnosed mental health condition – if the young person and their supporters feel the Wellbeing Passport and card will help them, they can use it.

How will it help?

Families and supporters expressed that it is sometimes difficult for them and their young person to talk about their mental health challenges, particularly in an emergency or a crisis situation. The Wellbeing Passport and card supports a young person to share information and details about their mental health challenges in different situations. This means that if they feel unable to talk about it out loud, or if they forget vital pieces of information, they can show their passport instead. It could provide important details to the young person's teachers at school, to their GP, to any other services supporting them such as CAMHS, or if they need to visit the accident and emergency department at hospital.





Enthusiasm



Plan your weekly wellbeing

Flex your character muscles and build mental strength through our wellbeing activities

Motivation Monday

Try a different approach to an everyday task. Perhaps you want to be more **enthusiastic**, work smarter or use a new skill?

Tolerance Tuesday

Try this strategy to help build **tolerance**. Think about times when others have found you difficult to deal with. How did they react to you? How did that make you feel? Now think about how you react to others in similar situations. How can you act differently next time?

Wellbeing

Wednesday

Decluttering your space can help you feel more relaxed. Tidy your room, or shared living space, and then take some time-out.

Thankfulness Thursday

Take a moment to think about everyday objects that make a difference in your life. What are you most **grateful** for, and why? How would your life be different if they didn't exist?

Fairness Friday

Sometimes we forget to be **fair** to ourselves. Showing **self-kindness** can make a huge impact on how we feel. Don't expect too much and ask for help if you need it.



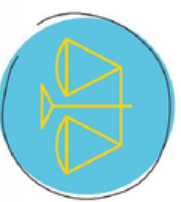
Tolerance



Kindness



Gratitude



Fairness





Wellbeing and Support Drop In



Need to speak to a member of the Team?

The Wellbeing Team



Mrs Blundell-
Roberts



Mr Quarry



Miss Apsey



Michael, Chaplain



Mrs Taylor



Miss Rice



Mrs Burr



Mrs Smith



Mr Liver



Mrs Bowker



Miss Western



Mr Wiggins



Mrs Ellison



Mr Greenhalgh



Mrs Webster



Mr Greenacre



Mrs Casson



Mr Wilson

The team are offering virtual drop-ins by appointment. If you would like to chat to anyone on the team, from Learning Support, the Bridge or Pastoral Support, please send them an email and they will arrange a time.

It is an opportunity to have a short chat that may help keep you on track.

Always remember, if you are feeling unsafe you should contact your pastoral staff or in an emergency, come to The Lodge reception so someone can help.