

Issue 1 - Dealing with change



Tips to help

This time of year in schools is full of change; new friends, new staff, new school year, new classes, new subjects, new routines and timings. Some students are also coping with change that occurs outside of school, new family structures, new homes, new countries etc. Whatever our young people are facing, change can mean a lack of certainty or predictability. It's necessary for growth and development and its normal. This edition of our 6th form mental health newsletter will give you some tips on how to support your teen with the changes they face.

1

ACKNOWLEDGE CHANGE

Taking charge is a coping mechanism.

2

CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN

Make your own routines and schedules. Write lists or small goals.

3

IDENTIFY FEARS

Your imagination of the fear or worry can often be worse than the reality.

Eat well.

Try to eat healthily, ironically teens tend to overindulge in comfort foods when stressed which tend to make us feel worse.

Prioritise sleep

Adolescents need around 9 hours of sleep each night. They will always tell you their friends go to bed later than them! Mood shifts, immunity, memory and concentration are all affected by sleep.

Exercise. This can really help lift mood, especially if exercising outside. Even just a walk around the block or park releases hormones that help you to feel better. This is also a perfect time to have a parent/ teen chat.

Relaxation and fun

This is equally important to working hard. The healthy balance in life is what we all strive for and what keeps us motivated.

Talking about what has changed.

Your teenager needs to know that it's ok to not feel ok. Negative emotions will not disappear overnight but talking about things will help your teen to process their feelings and develop strengths to deal with the changes ahead. Your child will feel reassured that they are not alone and that their feelings will pass.

Try one of these conversation starters;

"You've had a tough time recently, how are you feeling this week?"

"It must be hard starting a new course / changing school or changing friendship groups, how are you feeling about it?"

"I've found all the new changes recently really overwhelming, how about you?"

Validate your teens feelings Adults can sometimes be dismissive of young people's feelings and problems because they don't seem like a big deal to us. They need to feel 'you get them', and that what is happening and how they feel about it is valid. Reflection can happen at a later date.



Re-framing difficult situations can help. Helping your teen to reframe something can help them process the difficulty and see a different perspective.

Try saying;

"Your friendships have been a bit difficult for you recently, but what are some of the moments that have been good / gone well?"

"I know your workload seems overwhelming at the moment, but let's talk about when you were able to cope with a big workload before, how did you do it then?"

"I know your teacher was disappointed you didn't do your homework, I wonder if it is because she wants you to get a good grade for this topic and is worried you aren't focused?"

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF TOO!

You can cope with your teenagers mood swings and emotions. By staying calm when your child is anxious or upset, you are helping to reduce their stress levels. Often the situations that cause anxiety in our children are also difficult for us. Try to:

Take some time to maintain your own adult friendships and time spent with them. Try talking about your own feelings.

Commit to your own exercise and relaxation time, this could be with your teen or by yourself.

Eat well and model healthy eating, drinking and sleep habits. If possible, come together as a family at some point during the week to eat together and talk about your day.

By looking after yourself, you'll also be role modelling to your teen about how you deal with change and tough times.



Useful contacts - Pin me to the fridge so all the family has access

Emergency: In an emergency contact your GP surgery, call 111 or go to A&E dept of local hospital

Samaritans: Tel: 116 123 Free to call - Any time – any age – about anything Childline: Tel: 0800 11 11 Free to call (under 19's) Any time - help with anything

Text Services (in crisis/urgent need):

SHOUT - Text Service –24/7 text service, Text “SHOUT” to 85258 free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.

YOUNG MINDS – in urgent need text “YM” to 85258 www.youngminds.org.uk – 24 hours a day

Counselling:

Contact your GP who can assess your needs and make a referral if appropriate.

Youth Talk - www.youthtalk.org.uk

NHS - Single Point of Access for Child & Adolescent Mental Health – phone 0300 777 0707 (01438 843 322 out of hours) This service offers telephone triage for all referrals for Mental Health & Learning Disabilities in Hertfordshire 8am -7 pm Mon – Friday

School Counsellor – contact individual schools (also, most colleges and universities have a wellbeing/counselling dept).

Mind in Mid Herts (16+) – counselling and group work – Tel: 01727-865070
www.mindinmidherts.org.uk

St Albans Counselling Centre Tel: 01727-856693. 18-25 years self-referral – (offers a sliding scale charge between £20-£45) - (GP referral for 16/17 years offering a set number of free sessions).

Find Private Counsellors and Therapists via the following websites:

- BACP - British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy
- www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk/therapists
- ACP - Association of Child Psychotherapists www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk
- BAP – British Association of Psychotherapists www.bap-psychotherapy.org
- UKCP - UK Council for Psychotherapy www.ukcp.org.uk
- Counselling Directory www.counselling-directory.org.uk