

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Being a parent can be a rewarding and joyful experience but it can also bring some challenges. It is often the case that parents put the needs of their children before they take care of themselves, but this is something that should go alongside each other, side by side. It can be difficult to give our all to our family if we are feeling exhausted. Looking after yourself and recharging your batteries is key in helping you and your family feel happier, confident and build stronger relationships.

Below are a few ideas which you may find supports your mental health-

- Maintaining a good sleep- this may be difficult when your child isn't sleeping much too but ask your support network around you if they would be able to help you.
- Adding self-care into a daily routine, even if it is just 10 minutes a day, can help you feel recharged
- Treating yourself and looking after yourself isn't being selfish. It's being aware that you're important too and deserve to be cared for just as much as anyone else
- Find something that you enjoy doing and that helps you feel calm. Whether it is exercise or crafts, doing something for you can help you feel good
- Keep in touch with family and friends- if you struggle to find someone to talk to about what you're going through we are here to listen or MIND has helplines where you can call or email with any parenting concerns or worries-
Helplines | Mind - Mind please follow the link and find the appropriate number to call based on your current situation you need support with.
- Writing down your feelings- you can try this on your phone, a notepad and it may help you to reflect, understand and let go of emotions.
- Try to have some time for yourself- even if this is going for a walk or to a local shop asking for some support from family and friends
- Physical activity- having a consistent exercise isn't always easy when you have children, going for walks to get some fresh air, virtual exercise classes or swimming
- Consistent eating- if you feel you need help with getting essentials, please speak to us and we can refer you to support with food parcels.
- Planning to complete an achievement each day- this can be as simple as washing the dishes, when mental health is low- cleaning is the last thing on your mind so setting achievable goals will support with this
- Finances- if finances are causing additional stress, Citizens Advice can offer help and support

Additional Information

If you're struggling, it's OK to reach out for support from friends, families and organizations that are here to help. Changes in a parent's mental health can sometimes affect children. They may pick up on your anxiety, low mood or stress. This doesn't mean you should hide or minimize your feelings. You can try to explain what you're experiencing using phrases like, "It's OK to get big feelings, everyone gets big feelings but it's still the grown-up's job to look after the children" or "If grown-ups get big feelings, it's not your fault – we can ask other grown-ups for help with our feelings."

It's important to give children reassurance and support. Looking after your own mental health is vital to their well-being so don't be afraid to try new things together.

As you are aware we are here to listen, please contact me either by email- cbrown@norcot.reading.sch.uk or phone- 07483368773

Other organizations providing support to children and families include:

Mind- <https://www.mind.org.uk/> Information and support as well as helplines for people experiencing mental health problems and their friends and families.

Rethink- <https://www.rethink.org/> Advice as well as services and support for people affected by mental illness and their friends and families.

Samaritans- <https://www.samaritans.org/> Round-the-clock confidential support to people going through a tough time.

SANE- <https://www.sane.org.uk/> Emotional support to people affected by mental health problems and their families and friends.