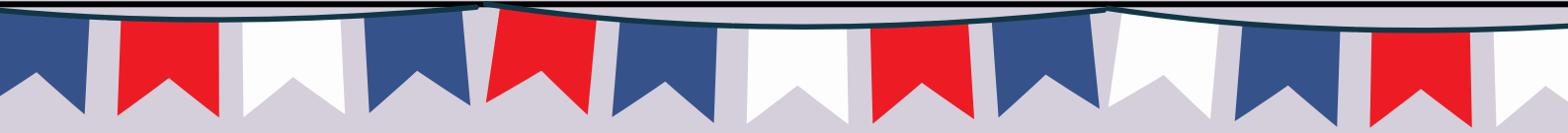




SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



Summer Term 2023



Welcome to RFSS Secondary School's first Safeguarding Newsletter.

You can expect to receive an update at the start of each term. Our aim is to bring you all the latest, relevant help and advice on issues that we feel will be of importance to you.

In this issue we talk about:

- How to keep yourself safe and healthy during exam season
- Dangers of social pressures linked to 'influencers'

WHO CAN HELP?



Anonymous site which helps children and young people to feel safe and confident in exploring their concerns and seeking professional support



Free online counselling service



Great starting point if you don't know what support you or your family needs



NHS led service providing emotional well being and mental health services for children and young people in Coventry and Warwickshire



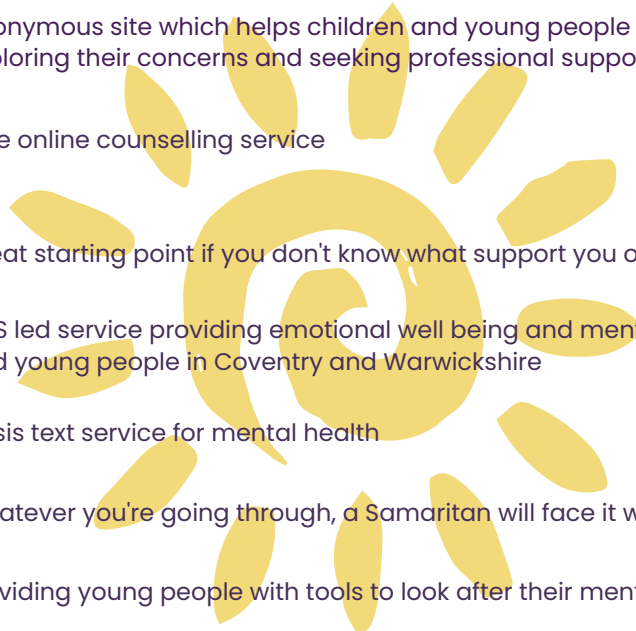
Crisis text service for mental health



Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you.



Providing young people with tools to look after their mental health



MEET THE TEAM



MANDY MILSOM

Designated Safeguarding Lead
mandy.milsom@rugbyfreesecondary.co.uk
01788 222060



JOEDIE BRADGATE

Deputy DSL
joedie.bradgate@rugbyfreesecondary.co.uk
07736907677

DSL TRAINED STAFF

- Iain Green
- Bethan Austen
- Karen Lewis
- Rachael Probert
- Brandon Hallmark
- Xian Wright
- Chris Doherty
- Gurjit Rupal
- Phil Edwards
- Susie Pillay
- Nicole Sinclair
- Faye Smith
- Summer Stewardson
- Kelly Davies

Exam stress

Resources by
**student
minds**

Working towards exams can create feelings of worry and being under pressure, especially at university where you're aiming for a degree.

However there are a range of things that you can do to help deal with the stress that you might be feeling...

Find out more about what we mean by the term stress and stress response at <http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Stress-Transitions.pdf>



Keep it in perspective

- Lots of people will tell you this, because it's true – exams aren't everything. Whatever happens in your exams, you can still be successful in life afterwards. So if you don't do as well as you'd hoped, try to keep things in perspective.
- Employers don't just look at your exam scores. They're just as interested in your attitude, your transferable skills and how well you'll get on with other people.
- Exam success doesn't define you as a person. Everyone copes differently in different situations and there's so much more to your personality than how well you can respond to an exam.
- Think about how far you've come already. You've already done incredibly well to get to university, and stopping or failing exams at this point isn't 'throwing away' your past success.
- Once you've done an exam, try to forget about it. There's nothing you can do about it, and worrying won't change your mark.

Get into some good habits

- These habits will help you concentrate as well as reducing stress:
- Take frequent breaks. Psychologists say we can only concentrate properly for 30-45 minutes. You could use a technique like Pomodoro, that helps you to take regular breaks. When you do take a break make sure you don't stay at your desk, you could go for a walk or even just make a cup of tea!
- Eat well. Keep a good blood sugars level to avoid highs and lows of energy, by eating slow-release foods like bread, rice, pasta, fruit and veg.
- Drink lots of water. People often underestimate how much hydration helps!
- Think about when and where you work best. Not everyone is a morning person, and some people don't find the library a productive place to work. There's no one best place or time to work – it's about what works for you.
- Keep active. Even a short walk will do. Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de- stress. Fresh air will clear your head and perk you up.
- Try to get about 8 hours' sleep a night. If you're stressed about not being able to sleep, there are lots of ways to aid a good night's sleep.
- Find activities that help you relax. Maybe it's a hot bath, watching a TV show, or a creative activity. Schedule this down-time into your timetable.

Get that organised feeling

- Picture your exams as a time-bound project. Are the exams 60 days away? That's your 60-day challenge. Best of all, there's a definite end point.
- Work out the basics: which exams you have, how the marks are allocated, and how much you have to learn for each one. Don't expect to learn everything; but having in mind where you'll get the marks can help you prioritise.
- Break your revision down into small chunks, and form a plan. Once you've got a plan, you won't have any more dilemmas at the start of the day about what to work on.
- Schedule in plenty of free time to unwind, and protect this time. Nobody can work all day every day. If you give yourself plenty of rest you can do the same amount of work in half the time or less.
- Equally, don't panic if you go slightly off schedule - tomorrow is another day.

Avoid bad habits

- Check out this brilliant article on how NOT to cope with exam stress - <https://www.topuniversities.com/blog/how-not-cope-exam-stress>.
- Don't set yourself ridiculous goals. Nobody can revise 10 topics in a day! Avoid setting the day up to be a disappointment.
- Don't cut out all the enjoyment from your life. It's tempting to decide you'll just knuckle down to work and "focus", but this is counterproductive - it's impossible to focus without giving your brain rest by
- doing other activities.
- Avoid stimulants. Caffeine, alcohol and drugs impede your energy and concentration in the long term.
- It'll also make it more difficult to get that much-needed sleep.

Get support from friends and family

- Don't be put off by friends saying that they are doing huge amounts of revision. As already mentioned, that's probably not actually a productive or efficient way of working long term. One of the key reasons people feel exam stress is due to comparing themselves to other people.
- If you can, discuss with your parents what they are expecting you to achieve. Parents with steep or unrealistic expectations will just add unnecessary pressure. It's helpful to let them know what you think you have the capacity to achieve, and to insist that the best way to get there is to have support from your parents, not pressure.
- If you're feeling really worried or anxious, chat to a good friend, family member, or tutor. It helps to get it out of your system, and they may well be able to help think about practical strategies to deal with exam stress.

For more tips from students **check out our blog**,
<http://studentmindsorg.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Exams>.

Lastly, if you're feeling overwhelmed or are finding it difficult to cope with the stress around exams, make sure you **get support**. Take a look at our support section for the services you can access nationally and on campus,
<http://www.studentminds.org.uk/supportforme.html>.

Courses available online – via Zoom

Understanding Emotional Regulation in School Aged Children – 1 session – Saturday 4th February 2023, 2:30pm to 4:30pm (**Saturday course**)

Understanding Self-esteem in Children and Young People – 1 session – Thursday 9th February 2023, 10am to 12pm

Understanding and Supporting School Aged Children Who Self-harm – 1 session – Monday 13th February 2023, 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Understanding Sensory Needs in School Aged Children – 1 session – Thursday 16th March 2023, 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Understanding Low Mood in Children and Young People – 1 session – Thursday 30th March 2023, 10am to 12pm

Understanding and Supporting Children Aged 3-11 Years with Anxiety – 1 session – Monday 8th May 2023, 10am to 12pm

Understanding Sensory Needs in School Aged Children – 1 session – Saturday 13th May 2023, 9am to 11pm (**Saturday course**)

Understanding Low Mood in Children and Young People – 1 session – Saturday 13th May 2023, 12pm to 2pm (**Saturday course**)

Understanding Self-esteem in Children and Young People – 1 session – Saturday 13th May 2023, 2:30pm to 4:30pm (**Saturday course**)

Understanding and Supporting Children Aged 12+ Years with Anxiety – 1 session – Thursday 18th May 2023, 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Understanding Emotional Regulation in School Aged Children – 1 session – Wednesday 24th May 2023, 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People with Emotionally Based School Avoidance – 1 session – Friday 9th June 2023, 10am to 12pm

Understanding Self-esteem in Children and Young People – 1 session – Monday 12th June 2023, 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Understanding and Supporting School Aged Children Who Self-harm – 1 session – Thursday 22nd June 2023, 10am to 12pm

Understanding Sensory Needs in School Aged Children – 1 session – Friday 30th June 2023, 10am to 12pm

Understanding Low Mood in Children and Young People – 1 session – Monday 3rd July 2023, 12:30pm to 2:30pm

Our Academy is not a School, College or Academy in the traditional sense of the word, you don't need to be academically minded to attend and there are no tests, exams or assessments. The Academy delivers a learning approach to personal recovery and wellbeing that is offered by a partnership of organisations across Coventry and Warwickshire. We offer a wide range of FREE courses and workshops designed to empower you to become an expert in your own recovery and wellbeing.

For course descriptions and to enrol, please see website below:

Online registration:

Visit: <https://www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/>

Email Recovery.Academy@covwarkpt.nhs.uk 0300

C all: 303 2626





Social media influencers are people who have established credibility in a specific industry and have the power to influence other people's decisions. Most commonly associated with YouTube and Instagram, 'influencers' will usually have a large number of followers and be viewed as authentic by their audience. It is for this reason that many influencers are often paid by big companies to promote their products in the hope of persuading their followers to purchase those goods.



What parents need to know about SOCIAL PRESSURES LINKED TO 'INFLUENCERS'



AN UNREALISTIC PERCEPTION OF BODY IMAGE

Some of the most popular social media influencers often depict themselves as having the 'perfect body' and are paid to promote items such as health supplements or swimwear, which young people believe can help them achieve the same look. What is not always realised is that these images can be edited or filtered and aren't always a true-life representation. Your child may feel like this is what they need to look like and in some cases, become obsessed with their body image, which could contribute towards a lower self-esteem or even becoming depressed if they can't achieve the same look.



ENCOURAGING BAD HABITS

Although many social media influencers will get paid to advertise brands and their products, they will also post their own material online too, usually depicting their daily life or an activity for example. This may have both desirable and undesirable consequences, with influencers able to inspire both good habits, such as healthy eating, exercise or kindness. However it may also encourage children to adopt bad habits, such as drinking, smoking, swearing or even criminal behaviour, particularly if these are seen to be endorsed by the influencer.



AUTHENTICITY OF ENDORSEMENTS

Social media influencers hold a lot of persuasion with their audience and are often looked up to by younger followers. Many children will see them as credible, authentic and trust what they see online. However, some influencers may not always believe in the product they are promoting and therefore can mislead their followers, abusing their level of confidence in them. Your child may therefore find themselves looking up to people who are disingenuous or who feign interest in activities that they themselves do not actually care about.

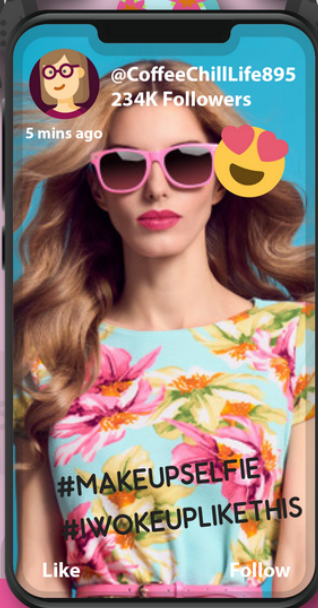
BECOMING UNREALISTIC ROLE MODELS

As children become more and more involved on social media and identify who their favourite people are to follow, they may come to see social media influencers as role models, particularly if they are attracted by the lifestyle they see online. This could lead them into developing potentially unrealistic expectations of life and in some cases, using their role models as an escape from reality, particularly if they feel like they're own life isn't very fulfilling.



THE NEED TO HAVE EVERYTHING

Many social media influencers will take photos or videos of themselves wearing the latest fashion or jewellery which companies want them to promote. They may also be provided with the latest gadgets to promote or, if they are children, toys to play with in order to persuade their followers to purchase them. Many children will be keen to buy these items in order to keep up with the latest trends however if they get left behind, they could be made to feel inadequate or inferior by other children who do have them.



Safety Tips for Parents



FOLLOW WHO THEY FOLLOW

A good way to see first-hand who may be influencing your child is to create your own social media account and follow the same people they do. This will give you a strong indication of what is shaping how your child behaves, what they like and what they are taking an interest in.



TALK ABOUT ROLE MODELS

Role models can play an important part of your child's life, particularly outside of the home. Talk to your child about who they look up to and why. Remind them that not everybody online is who they seem to be and if you do have concerns that your child is being negatively influenced, work with them in finding more positive alternatives.

BUILD THEIR SELF-ESTEEM

It's important that your child is aware of how unrealistic perceptions of life can be depicted on social media and that it is easy to be deceived. Discuss with your child how images can be heavily edited, cropped or manipulated to create artificial scenarios and that often the lifestyle that people display on social media isn't always realistic or in fact the truth.



DISCUSS REALISTIC VS UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

If you notice your child has suddenly taken a strong interest in the way they look, or you find they are a lot more body conscious, then it's a good idea to speak to them about why they feel that way. If they seem unhappy, try to build their self-esteem by talking to them and listening to their concerns, helping to build their confidence through praise and positivity. Remind them that looks aren't everything and not everything they see online is actually a true depiction of real life.



ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT THINKING

Social media influencers can be quite powerful individuals who hold a lot of persuasive power so it's important to encourage your child to think independently about everything they see and engage with online. Talk to them about the dangers of blindly following others and in keeping an open mind when viewing content. Teach them to always question people's motives online, especially when they see individuals are promoting a brand or product which they are likely to have been paid to advertise but may not necessarily personally endorse.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.

