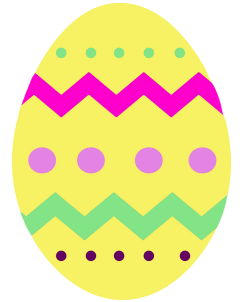


MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

*Mental Health Support Team*

MHST

THIS MONTH'S THEME: STRESS AWARENESS



**HELLO!**

Hello to everyone who reads our newsletter, we have added lots more people to our distribution list this month and we would like to offer you a warm welcome.

This month is Stress Awareness Month so we thought that would be a great topic for our main focus. We have also have included as many links as possible to local events for young people over the school Holidays. We wish you all a very Happy Easter and peaceful Ramadan. We hope you manage to have some rest and relaxation and spend time with family/friends.

**OUR FIRST PUBLIC EVENT**

We have had a very busy Month in the MHST and it has been so nice for us to be doing more and more face to face work. We have enjoyed meeting even more students and families in school and we were invited to our very first public event - **The 2022 Disability information Day** which was hosted by Blackburn with Darwen's Parents in Partnership together with Blackburn with Darwen Children's Disability Service and Blackburn College.



We were able to meet lots of young people and families and spent time networking with professionals from other agencies. We look forward to attending more events and speaking to even more people about our service.

**VISITORS**

We have recently had a visit from the organisations responsible for the creation of the MHSTs (NHS England, Department for Education and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) . The visit was a chance to share some of the good practice the MHST is involved with, such as this newsletter, the great work our participation group do and the transition work with the current Year 6's. We were able to have some of our colleagues from schools and Public Health join to describe the positive impact the teams are having on the emotional and mental health of children and young people in Blackburn with Darwen. We were also able to describe some of the challenges and the plans we have for the next 12 months to further improve the MHST offer.



April is Stress Awareness month. Since 1992, Stress Awareness month has been held to raise awareness of both the causes and cures for stress. Stress is prevalent in our modern day lives, and can have consequences for both our physical and mental health.

Stress is a normal emotional reaction to external situations; everybody will experience stress at some time in their lives. Stress has a motivational benefit for performance when we need it the most. It has the same psychological and physical attributes to the Fight, Flight and Freeze response as it activates our Sympathetic Nervous System. However, if the level of stress is sustained over a long period of time or the amount of stress we are experiencing begins to interfere with our everyday lives, it can start to negatively effect our wellbeing. For example our mood, motivation to engage in our social, work or academic lives

## THE EFFECTS OF STRESS

A key point to consider when thinking about how stress affects us is, everybody is different. Therefore, the effects of stress are different in each of us. Bad days happen for all of us, and this is normal. However, if you are experiencing changes or notice changes in somebody else which last have been ongoing for 5-7 days, it may be time to seek help, whether that is through speaking to somebody or managing stress in a helpful way. Stress itself, has survival benefits, and these benefits really helped the human race when we were hunter gatherers. It allows us be alert to danger and subsequently overcome the danger, maybe a sabre tooth tiger? A great help, then! However, in our modern world we can experience situations where we are exposed to extensive periods of stress and this can affect our physical and mental health.

Prolonged periods of stress is now understood to contribute to physical conditions such as IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), heart disease, hypertension and high blood pressure, diabetes, alopecia, and allergies. Stress targets our weaknesses. Therefore, for example, if you are susceptible to eczema it is likely being exposed to stress will cause a flare up.

## FURTHER WAYS STRESS CAN EFFECT US

These lists are not exhaustive as everyone is different

### MOOD

- Dysregulated emotions
- Irritability
- Panic/Anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Catastrophic thinking

### MEMORY

- Difficulty concentrating
- "Brain fog"
- Difficulty making decisions
- Self doubt

### BEHAVIOURAL

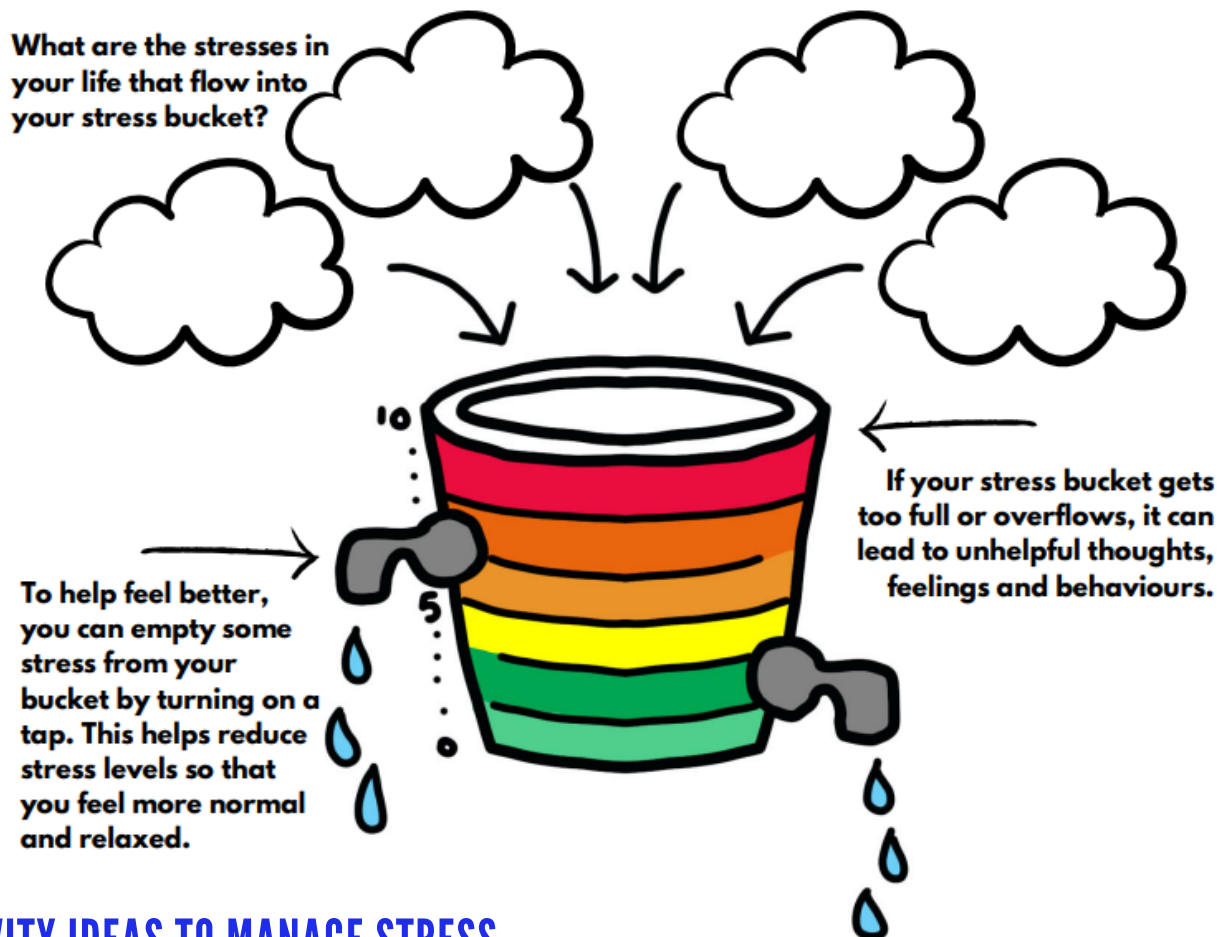
- Isolating from others
- Sleeping more or less
- Lack of motivation
- Increase in substances s-  
such as caffeine or alcohol
- Change in sense of humour

### Physical

- Chest pain
- Fast heart beat
- Indigestion
- Aches and pains
- Frequent colds
- High blood pressure

## THE STRESS BUCKET

The Stress Bucket is a helpful, widely used tool. It can aid in the awareness of different elements of our lives which are contributing to the level of stress we are experiencing, and then problem solve how to manage our wellbeing and lower the amount of stress. Please see below. Courtesy of WeheartCBT.com, please click on the image for the full, downloadable worksheet.



### ACTIVITY IDEAS TO MANAGE STRESS

When we are experiencing stress, normal self-care can go out of the window. Where possible, prioritising things like nutritional food, a good nights sleep and activities such as exercise can be a great start. Other helpful activities would be those that stimulate your Parasympathetic Nervous System which helps our bodies relax. When we are stressed it stimulates the Sympathetic Nervous System which is responsible for the Flight, Fight, and Freeze response. Examples include:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Mindfulness - This can be a walk in nature, colouring, or specific exercises. Apps like Headspace are helpful.
- Distraction such as reading a book, enjoying time with friends or family.

**CLICK ON THE IMAGES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**



Stress Management Society  
from distress to de-stress



Please click on any of the images for more information about each of the days that are celebrated during march

## FREE Holiday Club and Activities/Days Out



If your child is aged 5 to 16 and gets benefits-related free school meals, you may be able to access free activities through fun, food and friends, **Burnley's** Holiday activities and food programme



## Easter Holiday Club!



## Free Days out in Lancashire!

## Visit Lancashire

7 Easter activities for kids and toddlers



## 10 Easter Craft Ideas!



Topic based session based on mental health and wellbeing with time for discussion.

All ideas and feedback welcome.

## BWD PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday 27th April 2022

Time - 6-7pm via Microsoft Teams

If you are interested in attending, please email [emma.jackson@elht.nhs.uk](mailto:emma.jackson@elht.nhs.uk) You will be sent an electronic invite to access the meeting via Microsoft Teams