

Common mental health difficulties in children and young people

CAMHS Getting Help Service RBWM



CAMHS Getting Help Team



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Team Lead:



Chrissey Thomas

CBT Therapist
& supervisor:



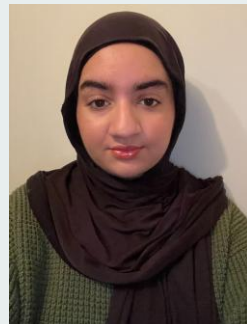
Rebekah Özesmer

Senior Children's
Wellbeing Practitioner:



Amy North

Children's wellbeing practitioners:



Tamseela Mahmood



India Pullinger

Victoria Kennedy
(trainee)

Mental Health Support Team



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Team Lead:



Chrissey Thomas

CBT Therapist
& supervisor:



Julie Fairbank

Lara Fincken-Thorne



Smmea Khan

Senior Education Mental Health
Practitioners:



Amy North



Katherine Radcliffe



Josie Sebire



Anisha Chandla

Education Mental
Health Practitioners:


MHST schools

- Altwood CofE Secondary
- Charters Secondary
- Churchmead Secondary
- Cox Green Secondary
- Dedworth Middle School
- Holyport College
- Larchfield Primary
- Manor Green Special School
- St Lukes Primary School
- Trevelyan Middle
- Wessex Primary school
- Windsor Boys School
- Woodlands Park Primary
- Wraysbury
- Virtual School

- Mental health practitioners based in GP surgeries offering mental health assessments
 - RUNNYMEDE MEDICAL PRACTICE
 - DATCHET HEALTH CENTRE
 - LEE HOUSE SURGERY
 - SHEET STREET SURGERY
 - CLARENCE MEDICAL CENTRE
 - SOUTH MEADOW SURGERY

 - Maidenhead surgeries coming soon!

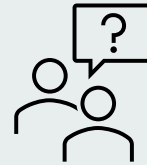
What we will cover:

- Understanding anxiety and low mood in children in young people, and the importance of belonging
 - What you can do to help
 - Exploring barriers
 - How to get additional support
 - Questions
 - Feedback
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- A thick, blue, brushstroke-like graphic element that spans the width of the slide at the bottom, with a slightly irregular, hand-painted appearance.

Ground rules



Keep microphones off,
but cameras on if possible!



Use the chat or put your
hand up and unmute to
ask questions



Listen and be
respectful of others



Keep it
confidential




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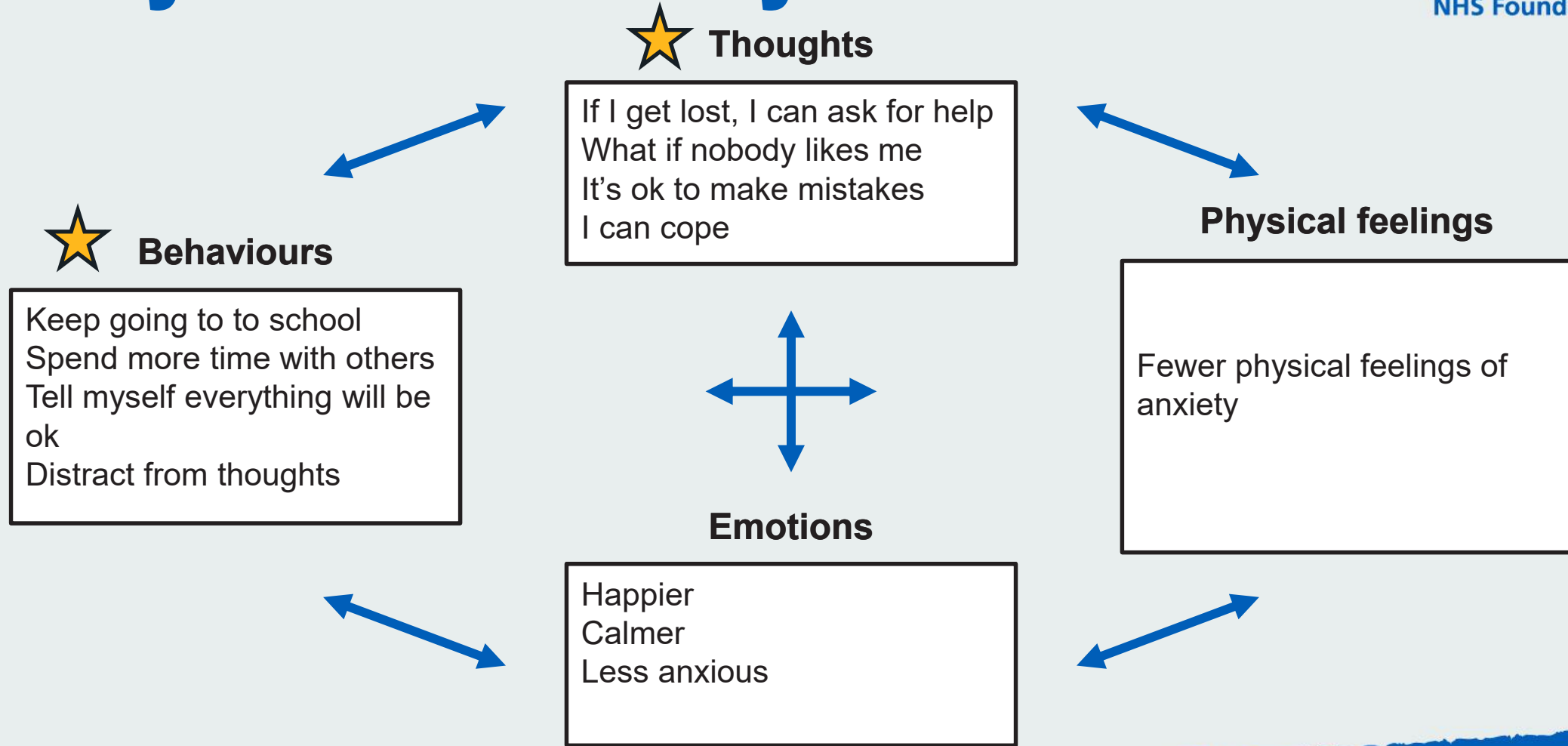
Understanding anxiety and low mood



What is anxiety?

- Anxiety is a **normal** emotion
 - Anxiety can help to keep us safe
 - Anxiety becomes a problem (and is treatable) when we overestimate the threat, and underestimate our ability to cope
 - If the threat is real, and outside our locus of control, we need to be making changes to the environment
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- A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide, consisting of a solid blue area that tapers upwards from the bottom edge, resembling a stylized horizon or a brushstroke.

The cycle of anxiety



Spotting anxiety

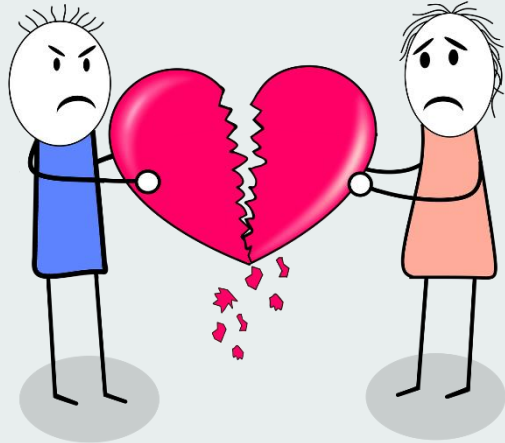
Emotions	Physical feelings	Thoughts	Behaviours
Anxious	Tummy aches	I can't cope	Avoidance/escape
Scared	Headaches	Something bad is going to happen to me/someone else	Rumination
Worried	Needing the toilet	What if...?	Checking
Frightened	Heart rate increases	Something is wrong with me	Seeking reassurance
Nervous	Breathing faster	The world/others are dangerous	Having a "reassuring" object
Sad	Shaking		Hypervigilance
Panic	Feeling hot		
Stress	Tense muscles		

Types of anxiety

Generalised anxiety



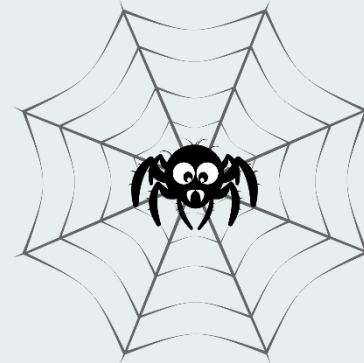
Separation anxiety



Social anxiety



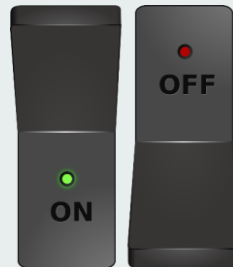
Specific phobias



Panic disorder




Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



What is low mood?

- Low mood is also a **normal** emotion
 - Low mood becomes a problem when it is **prolonged** and/or **persistent**
 - Low mood can impact our daily functioning such as ability to connect with others or completing day-to-day tasks
- 
- A decorative blue brushstroke graphic at the bottom of the slide, starting from the left and extending across the width of the page.

The cycle of low mood



Spotting low mood

Emotions	Physical feelings	Thoughts	Behaviours
Sad	Fatigue	I'm a failure	Withdrawal
Upset	Slower heart rate	They are better than me	Over/under sleeping
Angry	Doing things slower	Nothing will change	Over/under eating
Frustrated	Loss of enjoyment	No one cares	Irritability
Worried	Difficulty focussing	I "should" ... (unrealistic rules)	Crying
Disappointed	Lack of energy	Thoughts of self-harm/suicide	Increased risk-taking
Worthlessness	Changes to appetite		
Numb	Changes to sleep		

A sense of belonging

- Belonging is a fundamental human need hardwired into us, as our ancestors needed groups for survival (e.g. sharing resources).
- Belonging fulfils the need for connection, making us feel seen, valued and heard.
- A lack of a sense of belonging can make young people feel more anxious as they don't have the same sense of safety or support network, may also feel more anxious in social situations, and can impact their self-esteem and mood.



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How to help



Importance of communication



Importance of communication



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- Listening, just listening!
- Empathy (put yourself in their shoes)
- Validation
- Normalising
- Avoid problem solving
- Notice
- Be curious/check understanding

Open questions

- Help you and the young person understand what they are worried about.
- Supports young people to challenge their own anxiety.
- An alternative to providing reassurance, which enables children to realise that they can cope on their own.
- Being consistent with open questions is important, but hard! Try to keep responding with as many open questions as you can.



Open questions

What is going through your mind?

What is the worst that can happen?

What tells you this might not happen?

Have you coped in the past?

What are you worried about?

What has happened in the past?

What evidence do you have that this might happen?

What could you do to help?

Worry time

- Set aside time to talk about worries (not bedtime!).
- Encourage young people to write down or draw their worries so you can talk about them during their worry time.
- Sometimes we have worries that are not in our control, ask your child if there is anything that can be done about the worry.
- If the worry is not something in your control, encourage your child to do an activity to refocus their brain's attention.
- If it is something we can control, support the young person to problem solve their worry.



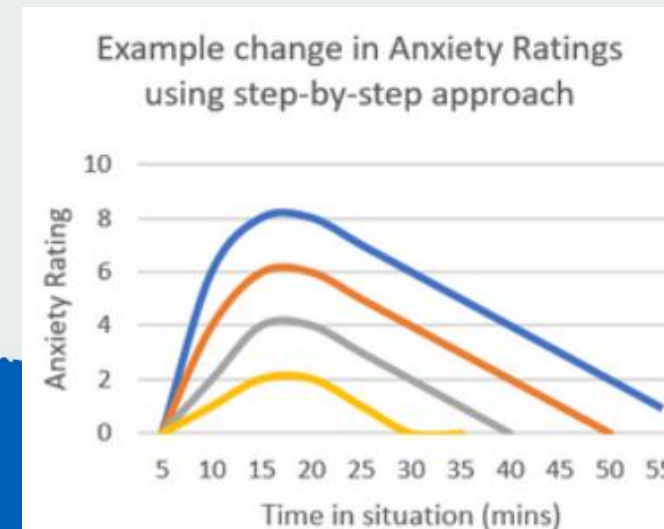
Distraction techniques

- Times tables
- Alphabet/category game
- Counting objects
- Playing a game
- Cooking
- Read a book
- Talk to friends

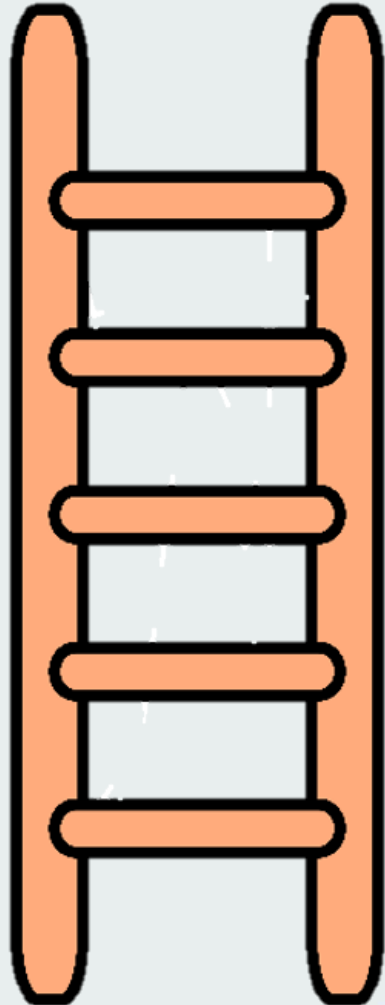


Avoiding avoidance

- It can be helpful to break the goal down into smaller, more manageable steps.
- Encourage your child to think of steps they can take to work towards their goal.
- Order these from the least anxiety provoking (easiest) to most anxiety provoking (hardest). The first step should be something they can already do sometimes.
- Encourage your child to start with the smallest step and practice it until they feel comfortable, almost bored! They will then be ready to move onto the next step.



Step by step



Attend all lessons for a full day. Anxiety rating 10/10

Attend half of the school day. Anxiety rating 9/10

Attend 2 lessons in a day. Anxiety rating 8/10

Go into their favourite lesson. Anxiety rating 7/10

Join in for break and lunch times. Anxiety rating 6/10


Sit outside the class. Anxiety rating 5/10

Go into the school reception. Anxiety rating 4/10

Do the journey to school. Anxiety rating 2/10

Put on school uniform. Anxiety rating 1/10

Behavioural activation

- Motivation comes from doing things, doing things increases motivation – which bit of the cycle can we control?
 - Important to have a balance of activities across the three areas: achievement, closeness, enjoyment.
 - Scheduling in the activities means we can follow the schedule, rather than following where our mood takes us.
 - Too many activities can be overwhelming for young people who are low in mood, start off small and build up over time.
- 

Self-care

Learn a new skill

Have a bath

Connect with others

Play a game

Listen to music

Do exercise/sport

Get outside

Eat well

Read a book

Journal

Have a good night's sleep



Increasing sense of belonging



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- Buddying up systems
- Groups or clubs
- A safe adult to talk to
- Teams around the child/young person
- Open communication
- Inclusive environments
- Praise and rewards



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Exploring barriers – share your experiences or concerns!





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How to access further support



Useful websites

- Berkshire Healthcare CAMHS training offer: Wednesdays 3-5pm for professionals.
 - <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/camhs-training-offer/>
- CAMHS resources website – pools together lots of helpful resources from across the internet available to help support mental health and wellbeing.
 - Camhs-resources.co.uk
- Kooth – an online BACP accredited mental wellbeing community for those aged 10 to 18 offering free and safe online support.
 - <https://go.kooth.com/idp>
- Parenting Special Children – support around suspected or diagnosed autism or ADHD
 - <https://www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk/>
- GEMS4Health – Workshops and activities for families of children with a diagnosis of Autism or ADHD or are on the waiting list for assessment
 - <https://www.gems4health.com/>

MHST and GHT Live Parent Webinars



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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND GETTING HELP TEAMS

NHS
Berkshire Healthcare
Children, Young People and Families services

LIVE WEBINARS


2026

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

TO SIGN UP, SCAN THE QR CODES ON THE NEXT PAGE



 Dates: Various

 Time: 6pm - 7pm

 Microsoft Teams

for more information about the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Mental Health Support Team please scan the QR code.



21/01/26
Supporting Low Mood



05/02/26
Supporting with Sleep Under 11's



26/02/26
Supporting with sleep over 12's



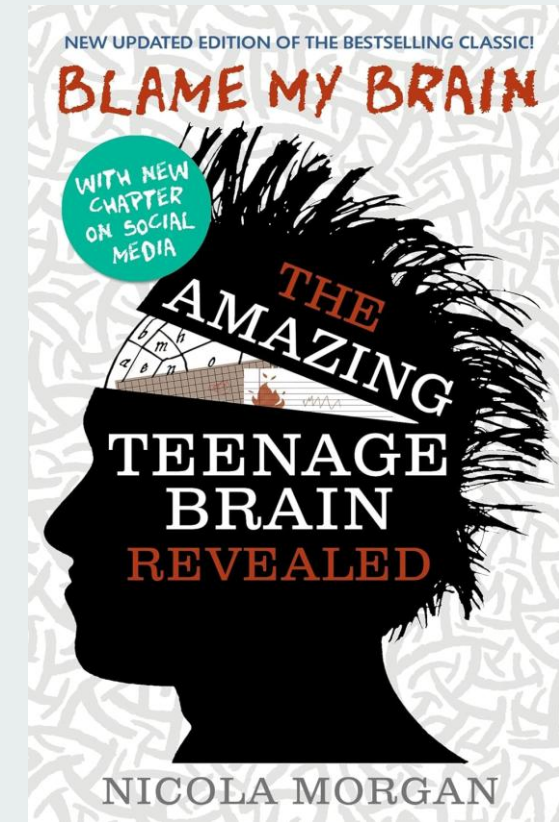
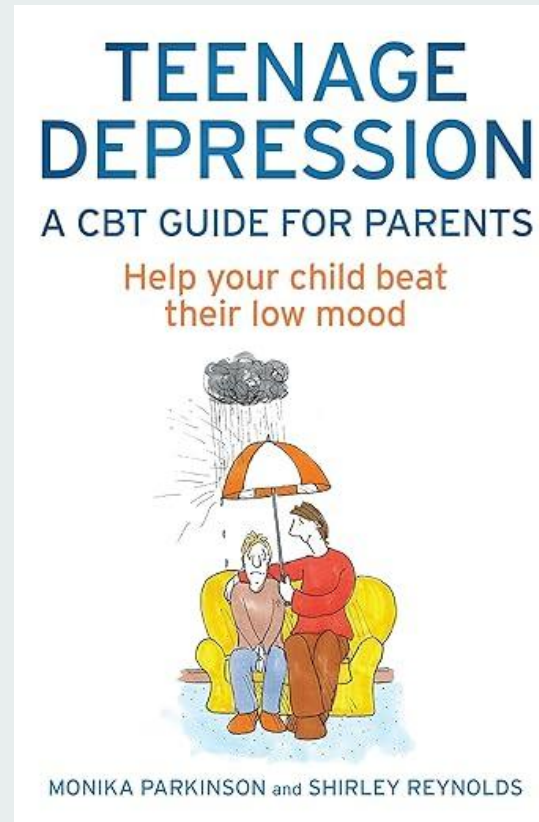
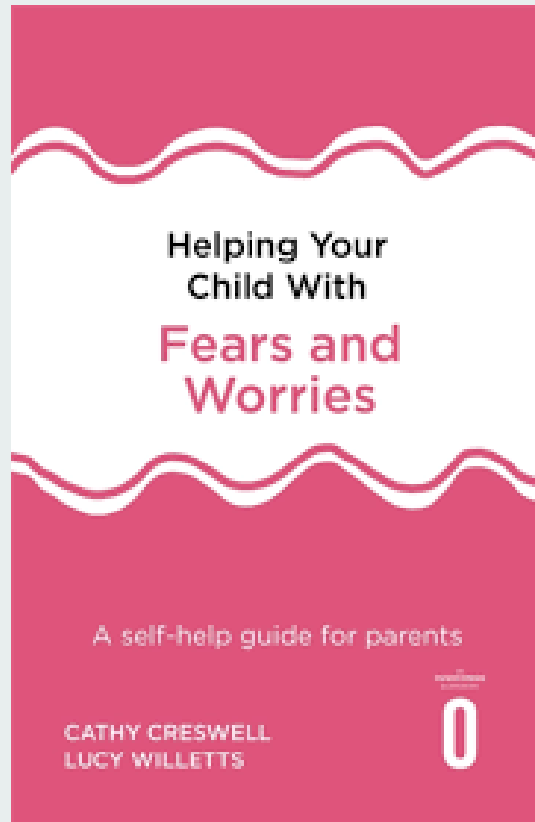
24/03/26
Building Positive Relationships at Home



22/04/26
Exam Stress Under 11's

Scan the QR code to book your place

Useful books



Requesting support



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Our team sits within the local authority's Early Help Services. You can refer into the Getting Help team via their Single Point of Access process by completing a Referral Form. https://afc-self.achieveservice.com/service/SPA_MASH_Referral_RBWM

Alternatively, you can refer directly into CAMHS via the common point of entry. <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/referrals/>

MHST schools: speak directly to your child's school who can support you to refer into the Mental Health Support Team if appropriate.

When completing a referral, please include as much information as possible to ensure your child can reach the most appropriate team as quickly as possible.

Thank you

Questions...?

