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MENTAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN!

This simple pack is divided into 3 areas-

PASS: Pass on the problem, and talking about mental health and advice.

PLAY: Activities to bring out certain aspects of mental health through physical activity.

PAUSE: Taking 'time out', pause and reflection.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

1) We all have mental health. Mental health is about our feelings, our thinking, our emotions and our moods. Looking after our mental health is important.
2) We all have small feelings every day: These sometimes feel strong and overwhelming, whether happy or sad, but they go away before too long.
3) Sometimes we experience big feelings: These feel strong and overwhelming for a long time. They stop us doing what we want to in our lives.

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SECTION 1: PASS:

Links to-

Honesty & Passion- Being open about feelings and emotions.

Respect- Can we respect each other enough to understand that people sometimes have bad days. Can we understand that we must respect our teachers and parents (who, at the moment, are the same person for many young people)?!

Self Belief & Determination- Do we believe we can overcome an issue and by talking about it someone can help us? Can we keep going!?

Teamwork- A well-known saying is 'A problem shared is a problem halved' can we work with others- including over the phone or Zoom. Showing respect for their own feelings and abilities, understanding that they are trying to help us, and that often the problem causes the frustration not the person whose working with you! Can we ask for help when needed or help someone else?

PASS FOR PUPILS:

1) Can you ask your parents to let you call a friend or do a Zoom meeting with some of your friends? Just because we can't meet up with our friends, doesn't mean we can't 'see' them! ***Can you talk about your favourite things about some of the other people in the group? How did that make you feel?***
2) Could you walk to post a letter or something, or simply pass a friend's house and give a wave and smile? Letting them know you're thinking of them could brighten up their day! If not, could you ask your parents to send them an email, or a photo of something you've drawn, or a letter you've written? ***Think how you would feel if you received something? Can you show someone you care? Could you perform a 'random act of kindness'? How do you feel as the sender or receiver?***
3) Can you challenge your friends to beat you at one of our '**Play**' challenges and talk about your attempts, can you help them, or they help you to improve your scores, share tips, or come up with your own versions or completely new challenges…? These could even be shared with your own school; or if you send them to jamieson.sm@gmail.com ,or tag us on Facebook or Twitter, we'll share across the county or even country!!
4) Can you try and talk to your parents &/or brothers or sisters, about how you feel? Perhaps use an emoji of your current mood to start the discussion. ***How did you feel before the conversation, how did you feel afterwards?***
5) Ask how someone else feels? ***Does how you act have an effect on how others feel?***

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PASS FOR PARENTS:

The Anna Freud Centre suggest the following tips for talking to young people about mental health:

1) Make conversations about mental health a normal part of life: Anywhere is a good place to talk; in the car, walking the dog or cooking together. Model everyday talk about feelings such as by talking about a TV character's feelings.
2) Give your full attention: We all know it's horrible to be half listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.
3) Check your body language: Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.
4) Take it seriously: Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're "just being silly". Resist the urge to reassure them that everything is fine.
5) Ask open questions: Such as "How did your day go today?" This will help to extend the conversation.
6) Calmly stay with the feelings that arise: It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.
7) Offer empathy rather than solutions: Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve the problem.
8) Remember we are all different: Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different to yours.
9) Look for clues about feelings: Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.
10) Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be: "How are you feeling at the moment?" "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?" "Do you fancy a chat?" "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat."

Try to encourage your child to look at their own tasks on the previous page.

You could also try using emojis to get them to demonstrate how they're feeling at a certain time or about a given task- either print out an emoji chart or use their mobile phone or tablet. This would be a good conversation starter.

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SECTION 2: PLAY:

Links to-

Honesty- Can you stick to the rules and just do your best, giving an honest result?

Passion- Can you control your emotions, win, lose or draw. It's OK to not like losing but often someone has to lose or you can't play the game. ***How could you react better?***

Respect- Can we respect each other- our parents or siblings that may be with us and helping with the rules, but also people having a go in their own homes. Understanding everyone is trying and that different people find different things hard or easy!

Self Belief & Determination- Do we believe we can do the challenge, that it may not be easy for us, but that we'll get better the more we try, learning from our mistakes and not giving up?!

Teamwork- Can we work with those around us. Showing respect for their own feelings and abilities, understanding that they are trying to help us. Can we learn from others, or help others to improve, can we lead by example?

PLAY FOR PUPILS:

In Section 3: '*PAUSE*', we talk about breaking problems down into smaller more manageable pieces. That's the same for exercise! Starting small and building up is fine- doing anything is better than sitting around and doing nothing! Even if you don't feel like exercising, you will feel better afterwards. Try it! *How did you feel, before, during, after?*

Sports Leadership:

Can you record yourself doing an activity that will get people moving? This could be related to a sport like football or rugby, or simply exercise like Joe Wicks, or running, or dancing. You may want to make it really fun, maybe even a bit silly… we want people to have fun but most importantly move around!

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You could do one that's a bit more like a PE lesson where people will learn something like catching- what do they need to remember to do with their eyes and body to catch? Can you include a challenge for people to beat or tag a friend… and us… on social media at @LHschoolsport and your school (or email it to us or your teacher) and challenge others to have a go at **YOUR** challenge!

An example is on www.lhssn.co.uk *News>December*

Challenges:

Here are some really simple activities you can try. Why not roll a dice to see which one to try, or just pick some!

If you want to just challenge yourself, that's fine! If you want to challenge others- Post your score, or a video of you doing it, on social media at @LHschoolsport or email your teacher and they may do it for you. Maybe even tag a friend and ask them to see if they can beat you and tag a different friend!

Keep going, don't give up- this is resilience and determination!! Be honest with your score but believe you can do it! How do you feel?

1) Using a ball, or even rolled up socks- Throw the ball up in the air and catch it with 2 hands. How many can you get without dropping in 30 seconds? If you drop it, start again! Can you beat your own score? How many did you get on your first attempt? How many on your best or 5th attempt, and so on… I bet it improved?!

   If you want to make it harder, use a smaller ball, or catch with 1 hand, or if you want a real challenge- switch hands after each catch!

2) Target Throw- using the same ball or socks to throw at a target. Get 3 toilet rolls and put them on top of each other into a tower. Now walk back 8 big paces- this is where you'll throw from. Perhaps put a shoe, or another item, down so you can remember where this throwing line is! Now throw the item at the tower… If you knock one of the toilet rolls off run and build it back up and get your ball back! You have 20 throws- how many times can you hit the tower in 20 attempts? Have you improved?

   If you want to make it harder, move further back, or perhaps time yourself.

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3) Repeat *Number 2* above- This time though, you will see how quickly you can knock the tower down 5x, now you'll have to run back and forth and build the tower back up, return to your throw line and throw again. Get someone to time you and record your time. You have as many shots as you need to knock it down 5x. Time starts on your first throw and ends when you hit the tower for the 5th time. Good luck!

4) How many star jumps can you do in 30 seconds?

5) How long does it take you to do 10 star jumps, 5 press ups, 5 sit ups, 10 hops on your right leg, 10 hops on your left leg? All one after the other, try not to rest if you can!

6) Get a football or similar sized ball- how many times can you pass the ball from one foot to the other in 30 seconds?

The Outdoors!

At the moment we can't go far but we could try to get out for a walk, run or cycle locally. Can you cover 5miles in a week if you're in KS1, or 10 miles in KS2, 15 miles KS3+ ?

If you have a smart watch or phone- use that to track your progress and feel free to share pictures. Who can do the most distance in a week?

Try to really look around you as you go, look up, look around- I bet there are things you pass every day that you've never noticed before. How did you feel before, during, after?

Orienteering & Family Walk

There is a family walk at www.lhssn.co.uk then- *News>March* so you can walk out of your house, spot different things, and count up your mileage.

There are a number of different Orienteering maps that we have created at Williamson Park and Ryelands Park. You can print out or use on your phones/tablets by downloading the free app *MapRunF* which shows you the map and 'beeps' and times you around the course. See www.lhssn.co.uk then- *News>November* or for **Round 2** *News> January*. The App records your times to complete the trail then puts it onto a leader board- please remember to put your name in the 'first name' and school name in 'surname' if you want to use that!

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Physical Activity- Health Diary!

To help you track your physical activity we have made a Health Challenge. You need to do 2021 minutes of exercise and this handy tracker breaks it up into 15 minute chunks! But don't forget the sport specific and Olympic values! ***Do you know what the Olympic Values are? Why not have a look and see if you can display them?*** You can get the resource at www.lhssn.co.uk *News>January*

Be Creative! Dance!

You are TikTok, can you create a short dance routine? Can you get your parents or siblings to mirror you and copy everything you do? ***How do you feel? I bet you laughed!?*** If you want to, why not share your routine and see if any of your friends can do it?

Be Creative! Draw!

Try drawing, painting, build something, dress up or write a story! Use your imagination! Is it something you like or something around a topic from school? ***How did you feel whilst you were being creative?***

Other Challenges regularly updated on www.lhssn.co.uk and @LHschoolsport -on Facebook and Twitter, and sent out to schools.

PLAY FOR PARENTS:

Play and physical activity are really important for children! It's how people learn to interact with each other, understand that things can be challenging but that they shouldn't give up, and to develop emotional understanding. It has a huge impact on their future mental health. In terms of physical health, it is vital for them to coordinate their bodies, to understand the world around them… and did you know that they need a strong, developed, core and shoulders just to be able to sit and write? These are just a couple of examples, the list is endless!

Exercise time has been included throughout the COVID19 lockdown for its benefits to mental and physical wellbeing!

It is recommended that every primary child should get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day!

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SECTION 6: PAUSE:

Links to-

Honesty- Can you think about how you feel and be really honest with yourself?

Passion- Can you use your positivity and energy to help you achieve things?

Respect- Can we respect our own body and mind and look after them?

Self Belief & Determination- How can we improve our self-belief? What have we achieved and how did we do it, were there problems along the way, how did we overcome them? Do we need to set even bigger goals?

Teamwork- How do we treat others, how does it affect us and them?

PAUSE FOR PUPILS:

1) Get a photo of yourself, or draw yourself, place it in the centre of a page. Now write around it everything that you think is good about you.

2) Is there a goal you have set yourself or a problem you need to overcome? Can you break the problem up into smaller steps? Draw a ladder and put in the steps you have to take to reach your goal- write the ultimate goal at the top of the ladder. For example, learning your Alphabet is the ultimate goal, step 1 would be learning the letters involved, step 2 may be learning the order from A-M, step 3 N-Z, step 4 put them all together, Step 5 GOAL!! Breaking things down into more manageable chunks will really help you with lots of tasks!

3) Think about something you have achieved, or somewhere nice that you've been. Think about all the good things about that experience. Take 5 minutes to remember it, concentrate on how you felt, and think why you felt that way?

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Activity for both parents and children: Breathing

Counting:

Children should focus on their breathing by counting the number of 'in' breaths and 'out' breaths. "I am breathing in 1, I am breathing out 1, I am breathing in 2, I am breathing out 2…". Encourage them to continue do this until they reach number 10.

Finger Breathing:

Make sure you're sitting up straight with a nice, long spine. Breathing in and out through our nose only; quietly, slowly and as relaxed as we can. Place your right elbow on your desk or knee, with your palm facing you. Take the index finger of your left hand and place it on the bottom of where your little finger (pinky) starts on the right hand. Moving your left finger up your right pinky finger, breathe in. Pause at the top for a few seconds, holding your breath. Move your left finger down your right pinky and breathe out. Repeat this with all fingers. When one hand is complete, switch hands and the repeat activity above. You should have completed 10 deep and focused breaths, in and out. Parents can do your own or you can count for the pupils as well: Breathe in for: 1,2,3,4 Pause for 1,2 Breathe out for: 1,2,3,4.

Finger Counting:

Ask the children to sit or stand in a comfortable position and to hold one of their hands out. Explain that as they breathe in for five counts, they will place each finger into the palm of their hand, until their hand makes a fist. As they breathe out for five counts, they will uncurl each of their fingers. Keep counting aloud for the children and repeat this activity for a few minutes.

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PAUSE FOR PARENTS:

We mention talking to your child in *'Pass'*. Can you help reassure your child that they can talk to you and that sharing problems can often help or assist them with any areas of this resource? Can we look at ensuring children are active as much as possible? Can we reflect on ourselves and is there anything else we could do as parents?

Allowing your children time to play and be active can actually help with home-schooling.

Make time for yourself!

Here's a quick method to help calm anxious children;

If children are anxious:

Remind them of the 5 senses- seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. Focusing on these, rather than the issue they have built up, can reduce anxiety. Ask them to tell you:

Five things they see - Four things they hear - Three things they smell - Two things they can touch - One thing they can taste

SOME OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES FOR TIPS AND ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT PARENTS AND CHILDREN ARE:

www.youngminds.org.uk www.nspcc.org.uk www.mind.org.uk www.annafreud.org www.mentalhealth.org.uk www.nhs.uk

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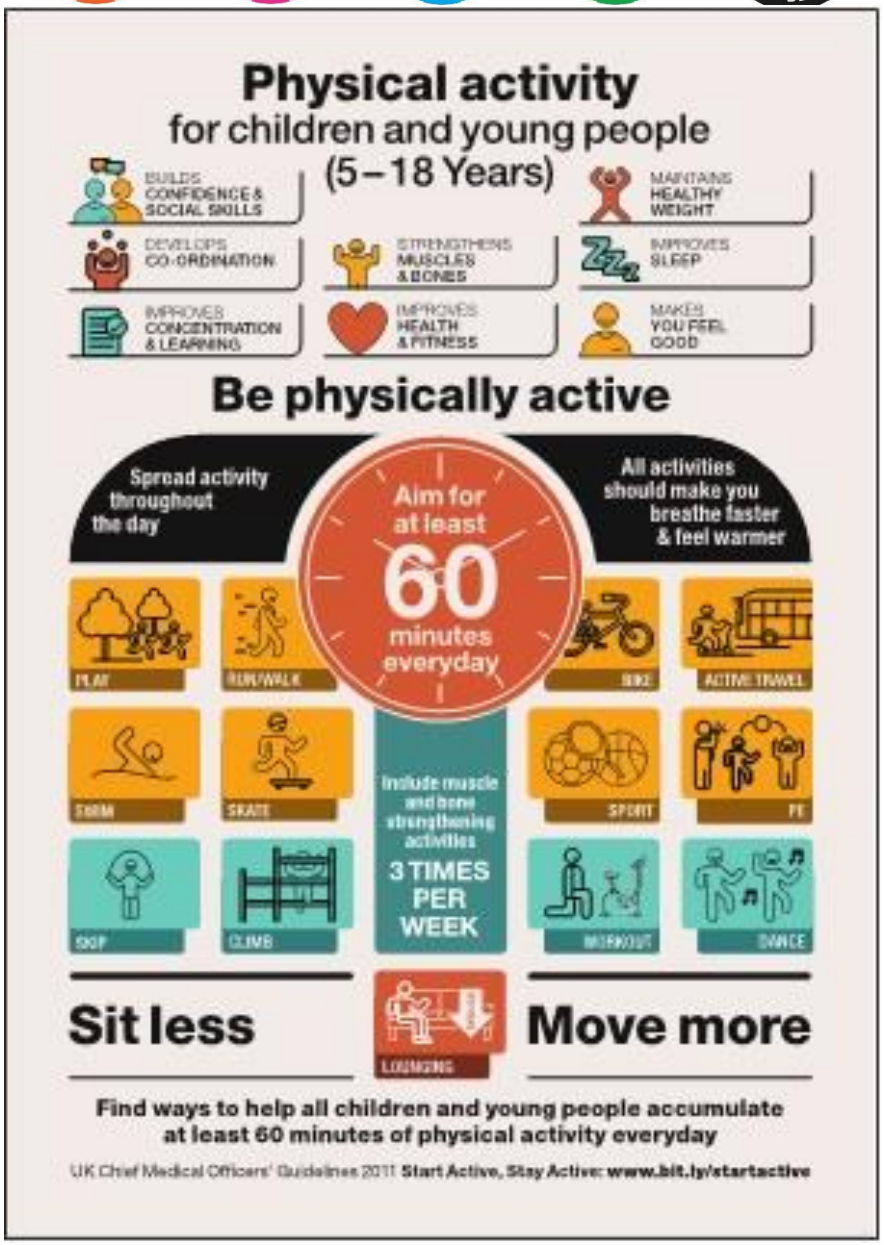

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