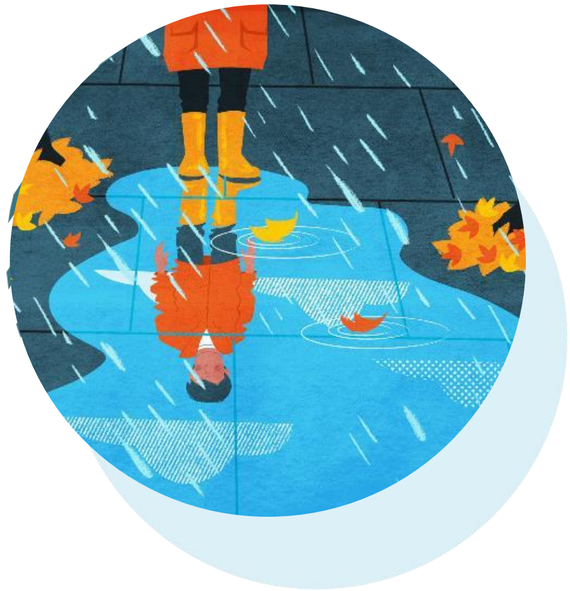


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Low mood/depression

Understanding and supporting your child.

Cupernham Junior & Infant School
Tuesday 10th March

Hampshire Mental Health Support Teams

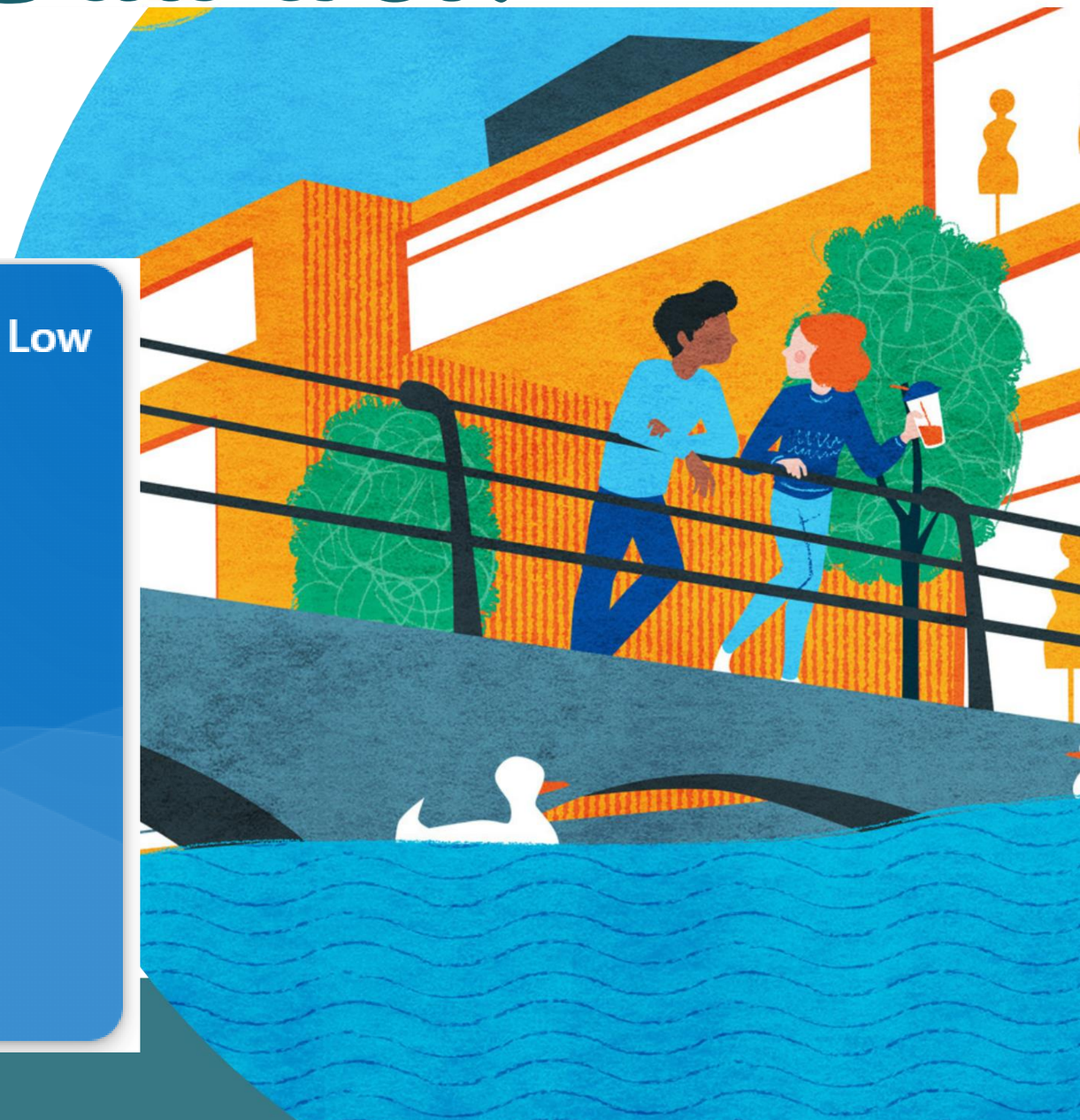


MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT TEAMS

Workshop Feedback form - start

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Parent Workshop Feedback - Low mood At the start of the workshop...



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

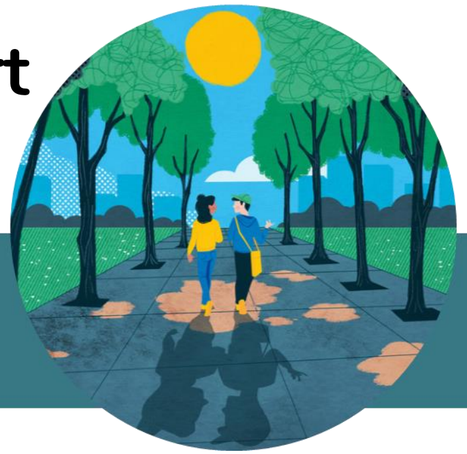
Welcome & Overview

- Aims and Objectives
- Ground Rules
- *Icebreaker (Optional)*
- Introduction to MHST
- Understanding Low Mood
- Maintenance in Low Mood
- Starting a conversation
- Action before motivation
- Values and activities
- Support and Resources



Aims and Objectives

- To gain a better understanding of what low mood is.
- To understand why low mood can occur.
- To understand what can keep low mood going.
- To understand how to support your child with low mood using approaches and practical strategies.
- To find out where you can access resources to support with low mood.



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Ground Rules

- Confidentiality
- Respect others' opinions
- Non-judgemental
- No question is a silly question
- Be kind to yourself



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Before we start

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the moment is now to

look after yourself

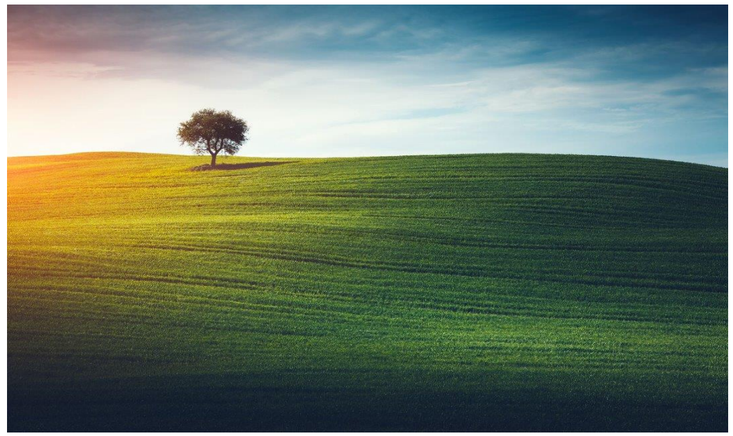


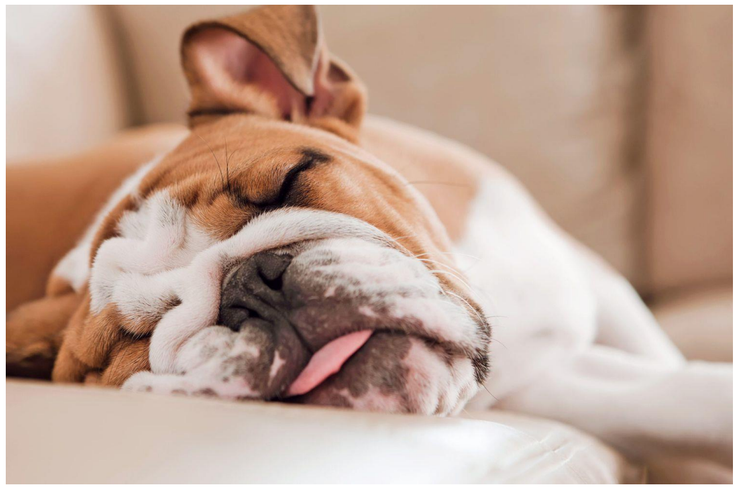
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ICE BREAKER

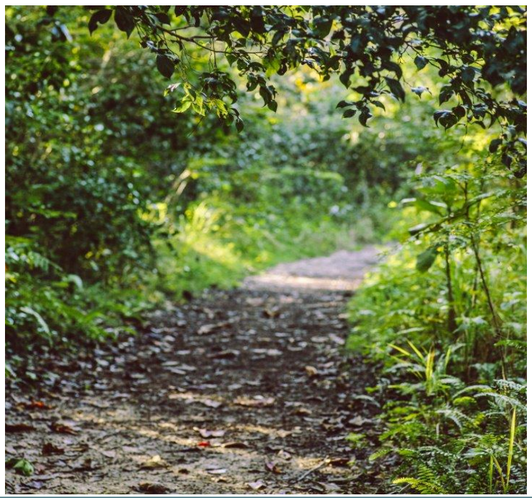


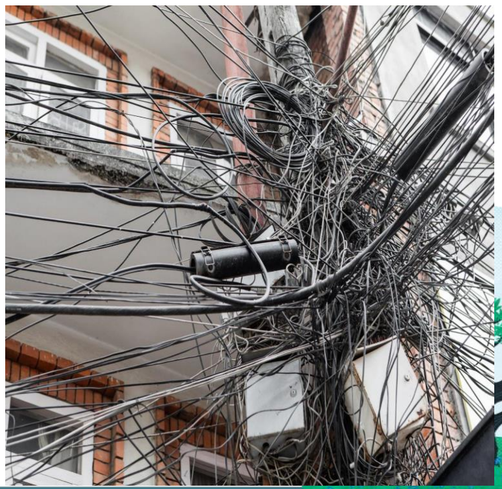












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Mental Health Support Teams

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- Early Intervention Service
- Mild to moderate mental health difficulties
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Based in Schools around Hampshire
- 1-1 work, groups and training.



MENTAL HEALTH
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What is low mood?

- A normal feeling of sadness/isolation
- Can be mild or more severe
- Feelings of tiredness or a lack of motivation/energy

What can low mood look like?

Changes in mood

Poor sleep

Suicidal thinking

Withdrawn

Irritable

Hopelessness

Negative thoughts

Unmotivated

Changes in appetite

Tiredness

Emotional



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Younger children may:
Be clingy or tearful
Have more meltdowns
Complain of tummy aches or headaches

Older children/teens may:
Withdraw or isolate
Seem irritable or “moody”
Lose motivation for school or hobbies

Remember: Low mood does not always look like sadness



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Why my child?

- Significant life events
- Genetics
- Poor diet or sleep
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Stress or anxiety
- Physical health difficulties
- Social media

Low mood could be triggered by any one, or a combination of these, or appear to have no reason.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

Understanding the Brain and Low Mood

Low mood affects how the brain works

When children are low in mood, their brain is often focused on **survival**, not learning or problem-solving.



What's happening in the brain:

- The **emotional brain** is more active (feelings feel bigger)
- The **thinking brain** is less available (logic is harder)
- Stress hormones can stay switched on

This means children may:

- Overreact more easily
- Struggle to think things through
- Find it hard to explain what they're feeling



Video - understanding depression



I had a black dog, his name was depression - YouTube



Maintenance/ Low mood cycle

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LIFE EVENTS
e.g. loss, conflict, illness

LESS REWARDING LIFE
Low levels of positive reinforcement

DEPRESSED FEELINGS
e.g. Sad, tired, worthless, loss of energy, irritability

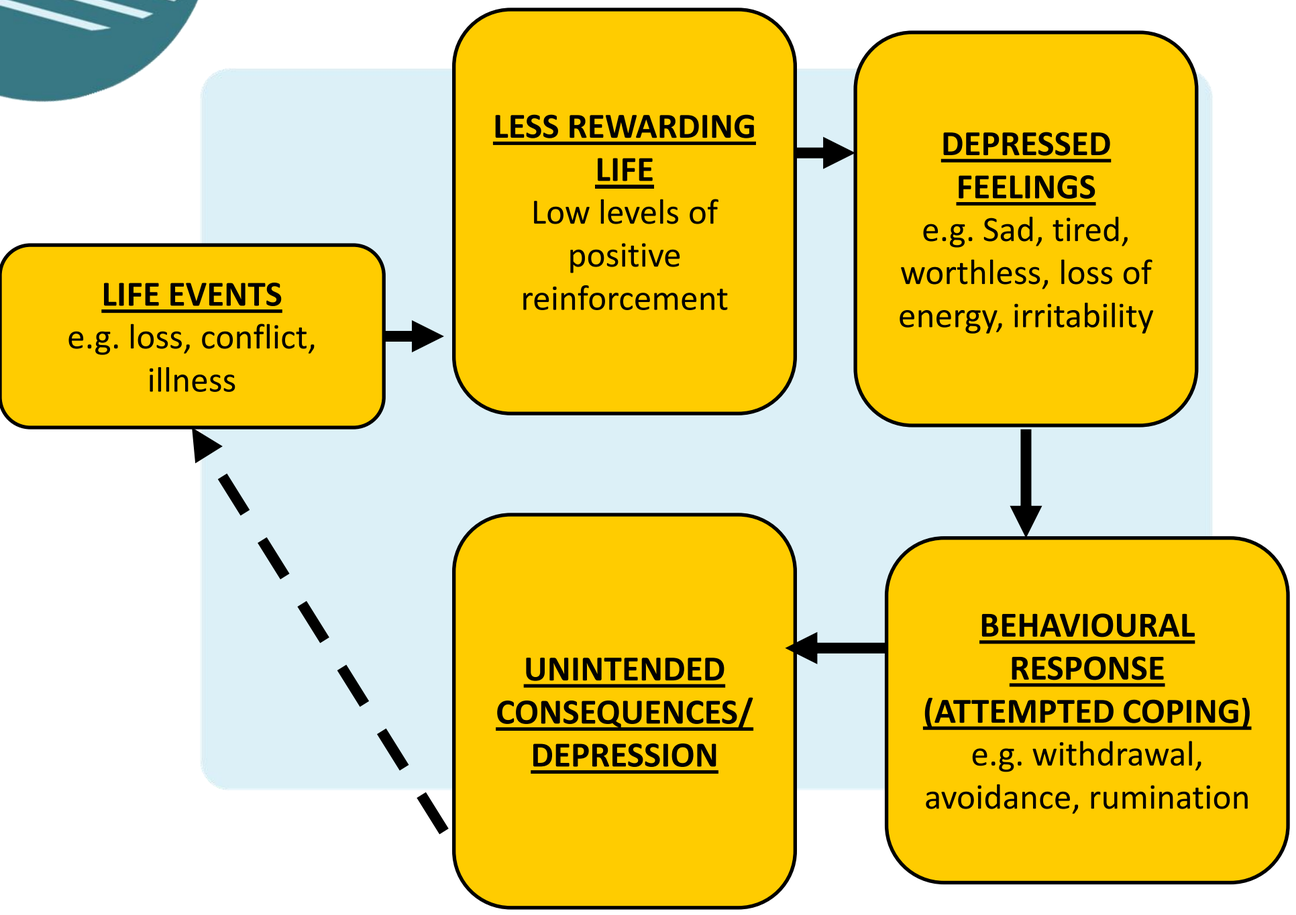
BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSE (ATTEMPTED COPING)
e.g. withdrawal, avoidance, rumination

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES/ DEPRESSION



What keeps it going?

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- Withdrawing from activities
- Limited socialisation
- Avoidance
- Negative thinking
- Unhelpful coping mechanisms



What children need most from adults

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Children with low mood need:
To feel heard
To feel safe
To feel accepted
To feel hope

They don't always need:
Immediate solutions
Lectures
Being "cheered up"
This slide is often a lightbulb moment for parents.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

Starting a conversation

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- Be non-judgemental
- Be curious
- Actively listen
- Be empathic
- Ask rather than tell

- Be aware of yours/their emotions
- Think about when/where to talk
- Open body language
- Check understanding
- Notice and wonder



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Listening that helps

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Helpful responses:
“That sounds really hard.”
“I’m glad you told me.”
“Do you want advice, or do you just want me to listen?”

Less helpful (but common!):
“You’ll be fine.”
“Other kids have it worse.”
“Just think positive.”



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

Everyday Ways Parents Can Support Mood

Small, consistent actions matter:

Predictable routines

Quality time (even 10 minutes)

Encouraging movement and fresh air

Supporting sleep and screen boundaries

Celebrating effort, not just achievement



Wellbeing for the whole family.



Back to Basics, Hampshire County Council.

https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/back-to-basics



Action before Motivation

"I'll go out and meet my friends when I feel better."

"I'll tidy my room tomorrow."

"I'll join football club next term."

We know from research that doing something in line with our values/interests, despite not feeling we have the energy/motivation, produces chemicals in our body to feel better!



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Working from the outside in





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Activity Scheduling

Mood Diary

Please write down the things you do and rate your mood very low mood ☹ 0 ----------10 ☺ very good mood

Day and Date	Wednesday 24th						
Morning Waking-10am	Had Shower Ate breakfast with family 7/10						
10-12pm	School- Maths lesson 3/10						
Afternoon 12-3pm	School/Homework History 5/10						
3-6pm	Watch TV in room 3/10 Play Xbox with friends 5/10						
Evening	Scrolled on Tiktok until late. Struggled to sleep 2/10						

How to plan activities from the 'outside in', to improve mood.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

Helping Children Build Emotional Skills

Parents can help children learn to:

- Name emotions (“It sounds like you’re frustrated”).
  Avoid words like ‘fine’ and ‘okay’
- Notice body signals (tired, tense, flat)
- Use coping tools:

  Breathing

  Movement

  Creative outlets

  Time with safe people



“It Will Pass” – Using Metaphors to Build Hope



Big feelings don’t last forever
Children can struggle to believe this when they’re low.
Metaphors help them *understand* emotions without needing lots of words.

Helpful metaphors parents can use:
Weather: “Feelings are like the weather—they change, even storms.”
Waves: “Big feelings rise, peak, and fall like waves.”
Tunnels: “This feels dark right now, but tunnels have exits.”
Seasons: “Some seasons are harder than others, and they do change.”



Helping Children Challenge Unhelpful Thoughts

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Thoughts affect how we feel

When children are low in mood, their thoughts can become:

- Very negative
- All-or-nothing
- Harsh or self-critical

These thoughts can *feel* true, even when they're not fully accurate.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

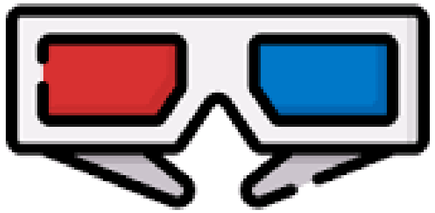
Parents can help by gently exploring thoughts

Instead of arguing with the thought, try:

Getting curious

Slowing it down

Offering a more balanced view



Helpful questions to try:

“What’s making you think that?”

“Is there another way to look at this?”

“What would you say to a friend who felt this way?”

“Has this *always* been true?”



Building strengths and gratitude

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Why this matters:
Research shows when children notice what's going *right*, it can gently lift mood and build resilience over time.

Building strengths means:
Noticing effort, not just outcomes
Helping children recognise what they're good at
Giving opportunities to feel capable and valued

Gratitude helps children:
Shift attention away from constant self-criticism
Notice small positives, even on hard days
Build a more balanced view of themselves and their world



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

Practical ways parents can help:

Building strengths

“I noticed how patient you were with your brother.”

“You kept going even when it was hard.”

Encourage activities where the child feels *competent* (not just successful)

“That was really thought”

“You are so funny when…”

Gratitude (keep it gentle and realistic)

“What was one okay thing about today?”

“What helped you get through today?”

Modelling it yourself: “I was grateful for our chat earlier.”



REMEMBER: The PACE Technique



PLAYFULNESS

Support basic needs together



ACCEPTANCE

Remember your basic parenting skills and PACE to make yourself and your child feel safe



CURIOSITY

Set clear boundaries and untangle yourself



EMPATHY

Mend difficulties when things are calm



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

How can I help my child? – key points.

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Start a conversation

- Be curious, be open, normalise feeling low, validate your child's feelings.

Help them to take action

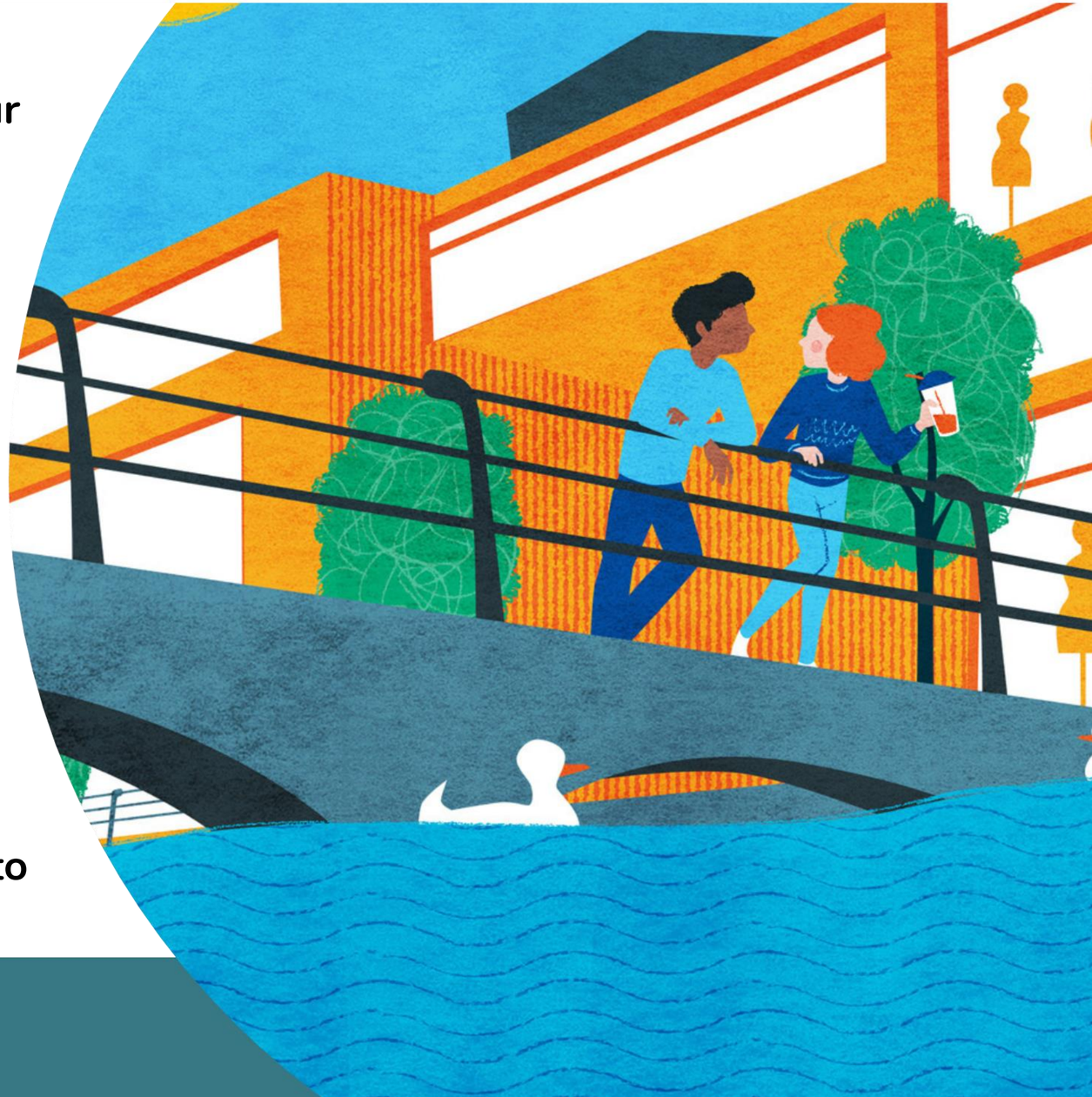
- Encourage your child to work from the 'Outside In'
- Start small, schedule an enjoyable activity
- Focus on achievement, closeness and enjoyment
- Break down bigger tasks

Support positive thinking and reflection

- Encourage positive self-talk, consider how they can reflect on positive change e.g. journalling.

Routines and lifestyle

- Build and sustain healthy routines (sleep/eating etc.)
- Think about social media use, and how best to use this to positive effect.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

When to Gently Check In More Closely



Consider extra support if low mood:
Lasts several weeks
Is affecting school, friendships, or sleep
Includes frequent negative self-talk
Leads to withdrawal from most activities

If you have concerns about risk visit HAMPSHIRE CAMHS website for more information and resources

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

When to Seek Professional Help.

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Reach out for support if you notice:

Persistent sadness or hopelessness

Big changes in behaviour

Self-harm talk or actions

Child saying they feel “worthless” or “empty”

Support options may include:

School staff

GP

Counsellors or mental health services



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

What now?

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What key points will you take away from this session?

Has this changed your thinking at all?

Do you feel that you have more of an understanding around low mood?

Do you have any actions you'll make as a result of today?



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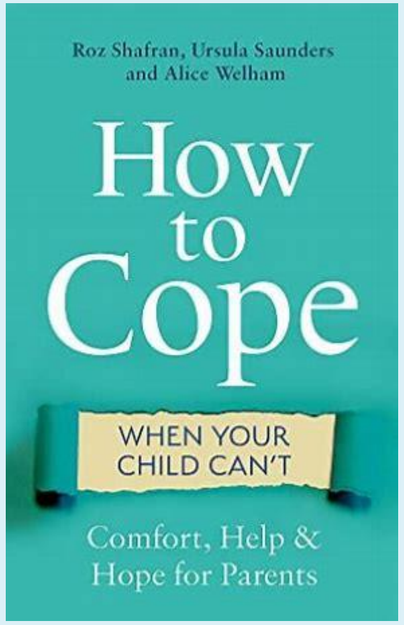
Visit our Parent and Carer section – Hampshire CAMHS Website

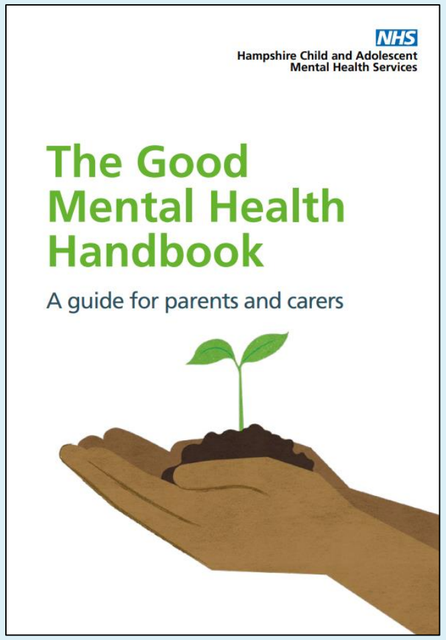


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Resources

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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS

SIGNPOSTING - Apps and websites

Apps

What's Up?
StayAlive
Mood Tools
Fabulous - Daily Routine Planner

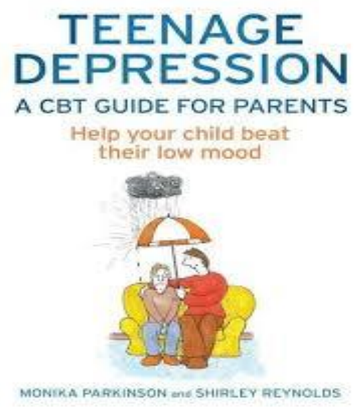
Websites

Young Minds	www.youngminds.org.uk
The Mix	www.themix.org.uk
Hampshire CAMHS	www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk
Kooth	www.kooth.com

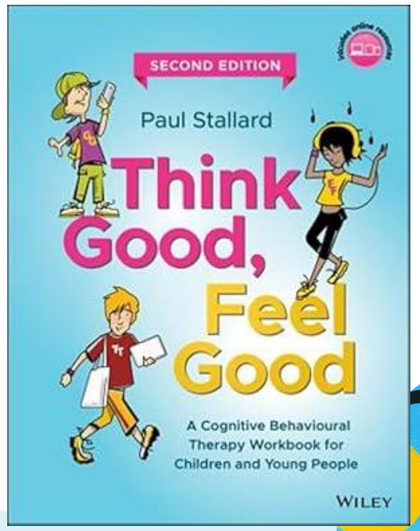


SIGNPOSTING – Books/workbooks

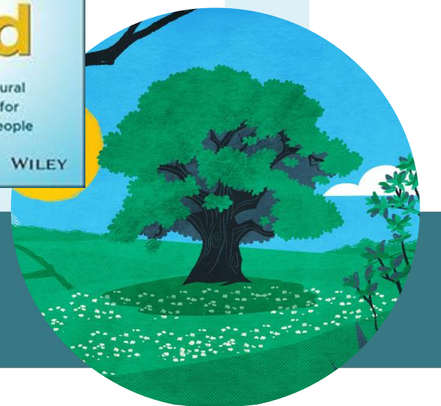
- **Teenage Depression: A CBT Guide For Parents: Help your child beat their low mood** by Shirley Reynolds & Monika Parkinson



- **Think Good, Feel Good: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook for Children and Young People** by Paul Stallard



- **Hampshire CAMHS wellbeing in ACTion booklet or Parent Handbook** – available on the Hampshire CAMHS website - https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/parents-carers/depression-professionals/



Workshop Feedback form - after

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Parent Workshop Feedback - Low mood At the end of the work-shop...



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THANK YOU

https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/



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