

Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

Information booklet

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Who We Are

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) are an early intervention service focused on evidence based, guided self-help to help improve children and young people’s mental health. We offer therapeutic support to young people as well as working closely with school to develop the whole school awareness of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

MHSTs were developed to be formed across the UK from a government pledge to increase mental health support in schools. This is described in the Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper (2017) document which was created by the Department of Health and Department for Education.

Our service is part of the NHS and we work within Children and Family Health Devon alongside the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). MHST works across Devon and Torbay in a number of Primary, Secondary and Specialist Schools.

Our offer is completely free and we are working hard to gain further teams to ensure that our offer is in 100% of schools.

Find out more on our website along with a full list of schools we are working within:



[The Mental Health Support Team in Schools \(MHST\) -
Children and Family Health Devon](#)

Or watch our YouTube video created with young people, schools and parent/carers:



[Mental Health Support Team \(MHST\)](#)

What We Offer

Education Mental Health Practitioner's (EMHP) and Children Wellbeing Practitioner's (CWP) work with children, young people and families with mild to moderate common mental health difficulties (anxiety, low mood and emotional dysregulation).

1. We provide evidence based Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Li-CBT) interventions through:
 - 1 - 1 support (face to face or virtual)
 - Group Work
 - Support for parents/carers.
2. MHSTs are made up of EMHPs who work in schools, alongside CWPs who see children and young people in the community to deliver support. CWPs and EMHPs can offer sessions within a local CFHD space.
3. We support the Senior Mental Health Lead in each MHST school to introduce and develop a Whole School Approach to mental health and wellbeing.
4. Give timely advice to schools, provide signposting and liaising with external agencies to get the right support for children and young people at the right time.
5. Our offer is split into 1 - 1/group work and our Whole School Approach work which is always growing.. find our more overleaf.

Our 1 - 1/Group work offer...

What is Low-Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Li-CBT)?

Li-CBT is a brief evidence-based early intervention therapy that focuses on the core principles of CBT which helps us to identify and change unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Li-CBT is aimed at supporting children and young people who may be experiencing low mood, anxiety and emotional dysregulation. This is through strengths based and goal focused support. Our Li-CBT offer is all evidence based in accordance with NICE guidelines.

Find out more about Li-CBT here:

[MHST Interventions](#)
[What is Li-CBT?](#)

1-1 and Group Interventions

EMHPs and CWPps offer Li CBT interventions for anxiety, low mood and primary-age emotional dysregulation. We offer these with children, young people and families through 1 - 1 session or delivered in small groups.

The Li-CBT Interventions MHST offer are as follows:

Behavioural Activation...

A CBT intervention aimed at young people aged 12 and above who are experiencing low mood. The aim of this intervention is to increase the young person's experience of reward from everyday life by understanding what is important and valued. To break the negative cycle of unhelpful thinking patterns and to support them to re-engage with doing things that they actively care about.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Behavioural activation](#)

Behavioural Experiments...

A CBT intervention for young people aged 11 and above to help challenge negative thought patterns which are stopping them from doing something they want to do or making them worry that something bad may happen. It works by putting thoughts to the test and finding out if what they fear may happen does or not take place.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Behavioural Experiments](#)

Cognitive Restructuring...

A CBT intervention aimed at young people aged 10 years and above, which works by identifying unhelpful thinking patterns or Negative Automatic thoughts (NATs) and working to put these negative thoughts on trial, this means the young person will be looking at the evidence for and against their unhelpful thoughts processes, as well as creating balanced alternatives. This intervention aims to help them to think and feel more positively about thoughts and situations.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Cognitive restructuring](#)

Coping Cat...

An intervention which is used for children aged between 8-13 years old. The aim is to learn how to recognise their feelings, how their body reacts as well as helping them to identify anxious self-talk vs coping self-talk. The young person will develop a hierarchy of their fears, to then create a fear plan to help them to combat these fears as well as testing out their worries with a reward system.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Coping Cat](#)

Exposure & Habituation...

A CBT intervention for young people aged 12 years or more and helps to confront fears and break into this 'vicious cycle' in a supported and gradual way, helping them build up to confronting their fears in a way that will feel manageable. The result can be that they feel back in control of their fears and don't have to carry on avoiding situations.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Exposure and Habituation prevention](#)

Parent Led CBT...

An intervention aimed at providing parents/carers with strategies to be used at home to support your child in overcoming problems with their anxieties. The programme is designed for parents of children between 5-12 years of age whose primary presenting problem is anxiety. The programme is conducted solely with parents and works through the book 'Helping your child with fears and worries' by Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willetts.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Parent Led CBT](#)

From Timid to Tiger..

A group intervention for children struggling with anxiety.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Timid to Tiger](#)

Parenting Intervention...

A CBT intervention which supports parents/carers of primary aged children with emotional dysregulation. The intervention works from a 6-step model over 6-8 weeks with the aim of supporting parents to shape more positive behaviours as well as managing challenging behaviours.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Parenting Behavioural intervention](#)

Worry Management...

A CBT intervention aimed at children struggling with generalised anxiety; it is aimed at young people from the age of 12 and older. The aim of the intervention is to help a young person to solve and/or refocus their worries which therefore allows the young person to have more time to enjoy the present moment and to be in control of their worries and thought processes.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Worry Management](#)

The Decider Skills...

The Decider Skills run over several sessions and teaches the use of 12 coping strategies using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help children and young people to be able to recognise their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, enabling them to manage their own emotions and mental health in a positive way. This intervention is delivered in a fun, practical and interactive way.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Decider Skills](#)

Relapse Prevention..

Relapse Prevention is usually completed at the end of your Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions, with the aim of keeping you well and preventing a relapse of symptoms.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Relapse Prevention](#)

Exposure & Response Prevention...

A CBT intervention for children experiencing symptoms of OCD. ERP works to break the vicious cycle by gradually exposing the young person to things that trigger their unwanted thoughts/ images whilst resisting the urge to carry out the compulsive behaviour. They will identify situations that trigger unwanted thoughts and gradually build up to trying more difficult tasks when they are ready.

[▶ MHST Interventions - Exposure & Response Prevention](#)

We also offer online interventions via our digital platforms;

- **SilverCloud for teenagers...**
it is a tailored therapist supported CBT online intervention that young people and parents/carers can access. We are also able to offer access to school staff to support their understanding of working with anxious children.

SilverCloud[®]
by Amwell[®]



- **Lumi-Nova for primary aged children...** is an evidence based, game style intervention for primary aged children to support them to understand and manage worry. This requires self-sign-up via the Children and Family Health Devon website. No referral is required. Find out more here: [Lumi Nova: Tales of Courage - Children and Family Health Devon](#)

Our Whole School Approach Offer...

- **We offer Mapping and assessment of the mental health provision in individual education settings** - this is conducted through a range of questionnaires to the young people education staff and parents and carers. Through the mapping process we are able to explore with you an action plan for the year in order to target the most needed areas of mental health support.
- **Consultation:** This is a meeting space we offer with the DMHL/pastoral team/ school staff to explore the need of support for individual or groups of children and to work with you on whether a referral into MHST may be suitable or if another option through signposting would be most beneficial.
- **Psychoeducation:** We provide evidence-based information and psycho-education, face to face or remotely, to children and young people, parents/ carers and education staff.
- **Mental Health Ambassador programme:** This is a programme we run to train up a group of children to be the schools mental health ambassadors, find out more here:
[▶ Mental Health Support Team \(MHST\) Ambassadors](#)
- **Training others:** We offer structured workshops and training either face to face or remotely, based on principles of cognitive behaviour therapy, to help children, young people parents / carers and teachers to manage anxiety and stress - we have included a list of some of the workshops which we currently have on offer, however we also offer bespoke workshops too.
- **Reflective Space:** A reflective space brings an opportunity for school staff to meet with an NHS practitioner within our team. Our Reflective Space offers you the chance to discuss a difficulty you are facing in relation to a student or group of students, emotional health and wellbeing. We can guide you to find solutions for supporting students with mild-to-moderate mental health or wellbeing concerns.
[▶ MHST Interventions - Reflective space](#)

These are some of the workshops we regularly run in schools, however, this list is added to all the time and bespoke training can also be created:

Title	Format/delivery	Aims	Delivery date(s)
Staff Training & Workshops			
Introduction to MHST	1 x 30 minute presentation Face to face or remote	Who we are What we offer How to access our support	
Staff general awareness of anxiety – primary	1 x 1 - 1.5 hour workshop Face to face or remote	Gain an understanding around the common signs of anxiety that primary-aged children can display Learn about how you can help and what to do next	
Staff general awareness of mental health – secondary	1 x 1 - 1.5 hour workshop Face to face or remote	Explore the meaning of mental health and wellbeing Gain an understanding around the common signs of mental health difficulties that secondary-aged children display Learn about how you can help and what to do next	
Managing Stress in the Workplace	1 x 45 minutes – 1 hour Face to face or remote	Identify the signs of burnout Explore ways to improve wellbeing Discuss what to do if you are struggling Provide you with transferable tools to support children and young people during stressful times	

Title	Format/delivery	Aims	Delivery date(s)
Classroom Workshops for Young People			
Understanding & Managing Low Mood (secondary)	1 x 1.5 hours workshop Face to face	To understand what low mood is and why we have it To understand how low mood can affect us To learn some useful strategies that you can try at home to help you manage your low mood	
Exam stress (primary – Year 6)	1 x 1 hour Face to face	Learn about what exam worries may look and feel like Provide you with some ‘Test tips’ to support you with your mental health before and during exams Set some goals around improving your mental health and to help with worries	
Resilience and dealing with change (Year 11)	1 x 1 hour Face to face	To gain a greater understanding around the concept of resilience Explore the importance of making connections/relationships with others Learn how to determine what you can and can’t control Discuss the ‘Growth Mindset’ vs a ‘Fixed Mindset’ Provide you with some strategies you can use to support yourself	
Sleep Hygiene (secondary)	1 x 1 hour Face to face	To understand why sleep is important To understand what might stop us from sleeping To come away with some useful strategies you can try at home to help you to sleep better	

Classroom Workshops for Young People (cont'd)

Participation and engagement (MHA) Event (Secondary and primary)	1 x 3 hours (including break) Face to face	To introduce how to balance your mental health. To support the development of the whole school approach to provide a mentally healthy environment for all. To promote the pupil voice by gathering feedback on the Mental Health Support Team resources and service development in your school.	
Participation and engagement (MHA) refresher/top-up (Secondary and primary)	1 x 1 hour Face to face	To reintroduce who MHST are To refresh your knowledge from the Participation and Engagement Event To outline your role as a Mental Health Ambassador in your School Discuss your SMART goals and their progress Make a plan for the future	
Understanding and managing anxiety (secondary and primary)	1 x 1 hour Face to face	To understand what anxiety is and why we have it To understand how anxiety can affect us To learn some useful strategies you can try at home to help you manage your anxiety	
Transition workshop (primary)	1 x 1 hour (1.5 hours if possible) Face to face	To normalise and problem solve common worries around transition To support and prepare for transition from Year 6 Year 7	

Classroom Workshops for Young People (cont'd)			
<p>10 a day workshop (primary) (1 hour)</p>	<p>1 x 30 minutes Face to face</p>	<p>To gain a greater understanding around each of the 10-a-day tips, relating to primary aged children</p> <p>Talk about why these are helpful</p> <p>Discuss how much you already use these</p> <p>Create some goals around the 10-a-day tips and your mental health</p>	
<p>10 a day workshop (secondary)</p>	<p>1 x 30 minutes Face to face</p>	<p>To gain a greater understanding around each of the 10-a-day tips, relating to secondary aged children</p> <p>Talk about why these are helpful</p> <p>Discuss how much you already use these</p> <p>Create some goals around the 10-a-day tips and your mental health</p>	
<p>Body image (secondary)</p>	<p>1 x 45 minutes - 1 hour Online or face to face</p>	<p>An introduction to MHST</p> <p>Defining body image</p> <p>Thoughts, feelings, behaviour & body image</p> <p>How to improve body image</p> <p>How body images affects our mental health</p>	

Title	Format/delivery	Aims	Delivery date(s)
Parent/Carer Workshops			
Understanding your child's mental health (primary)	1 x 1 hour workshop Face to face or remote	Explore the meaning of 'Mental health and Wellbeing'. Develop an understanding around the signs/symptoms that a child may be displaying if they are having difficulties with anxiety or low mood. Learn about what to do next and how you can help	
Introduction to MHST (e.g. for coffee morning or parents evening)	1 x 20 - 30 minute presentation Face to face or remote	To discuss the common concerns about transitioning to secondary school. Explore the signs and reasons for worries about change. Gain a greater understanding of the impact of supportive language and empathy. Provide you with practical, helpful tips to support your child's mental health during the transition to secondary school.	

Speak to your school's MHST Supervisor and Practitioner to explore the options to book this in.

How to make a referral

Identifying a Need for Support:

- A young person or parent/carer may request support within school.
- A School staff member may identify a young person in need of support.
- These requests/ observations can then be discussed with the Designated Mental Health Lead in School (DMHL).
- A parent or Young person themselves may wish to self-refer.

MHST Consultation Meeting:

The DMHL and/or School pastoral team can then complete the MHST consultation form and attend a consultation meeting to explore the need for support and if MHST may be suitable to refer to.

A plan for referral is then confirmed, if appropriate. If not, MHST will offer signposting resources that may benefit the young person.

MHST Referral Form:

MHST referral forms can be completed with the young person and/or family. Find the referral forms here:



[Referral forms - Children and Family Health Devon scroll down and select the MHST referral form.](#)

The completed referral form along with the signed consultation form are then both submitted to the SPA team at: cfhd.devonspa@nhs.net

Screening:

The MHST leadership team will then screen the information from the referral and consultation form alongside our referral criteria to accept the referral to MHST.

MHST LICBT Assessment:

A MHST Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Assessment will then be offered:

[▶ MHST Interventions - What to expect from your first session](#)

An Overview of our Referral Criteria

	Suitable	May be suitable	Not suitable
Summary	Common mental health difficulties with no/few co-morbidities, that are likely to respond to early intervention/low intensity approaches	Common mental health difficulties that may respond to early intervention/low intensity approaches (However, consideration is required concerning the severity and impact of the presenting challenges)	Complex and/or significant levels of need, which are not suitable for early intervention/ low intensity approaches.
Severity	Symptoms are mild and not present everyday	Symptoms are moderate and occur most days/ every day	Symptoms are severe and occur most days/ every day/ all day
No. of difficulties	Single difficulty	Main difficulty along with one difficulty in other area (mental health and/or physical difficulty)	Multiple current difficulties having current impact

Please see the MHST page on the CFHD website for the full referral criteria.

A snap shot of our feedback...

Feedback from a family:

...the support that X has had at school has been extremely helpful and we as his parents and, more importantly, X himself feel that it has been very helpful

...he is now a lot more comfortable at school and enjoys most days

...his resilience and self-esteem have definitely been boosted and he is able to deal with life's problems and people with more confidence

...the request for help and subsequent communication with your service and the school in general has been dealt with very sensitively

...I know that lots of young people are struggling and would benefit from support

...I think your service is extremely important and I hope that it can continue to be there for other children indefinitely

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...I think your service is extremely important and I hope that it can continue to be there for other children indefinitely

...if I was asked to consider recommending the school, it would definitely be a factor

Feedback from a YP:

Hi X, I hope you are well. I don't know if this is a bit odd but I just wanted to let you know how well I'm doing. Once we had our last chat I worked really hard in the summer holidays and recovered from my eating problems and my depression and anxiety is so so so much better. I am so happy and only anxious about what I consider "normal" like exams. I have been happy and healthy for about a year and I just wanted to thank you for your kindness and help. I am getting a bit emotional about how far I've got and looking back it was so so so awful. I appreciate your work thank you so much.



Feedback from a school:

I could write for ages about how wonderful the support has been from you and your team!

In the first instance, the MHST supported us in choosing an appropriate Mental Health Lead Practitioner course for me to attend, ensuring it would align with the values and working practices of MHST Devon. In attending this training, I recognised how privileged we are as a setting, not just to receive your support but to receive the quality of support you provide.

In terms of whole school- the training for staff has been well pitched and valued by all members of my team. The interactions held with classes have been OUTSTANDING - several practitioners, fun and engaging ideas, excellent communication before and after sessions and a clear objective, which was achieved each time.

The mapping meetings I have engaged in with X were all incredibly valuable and felt like genuine joint working. As I identify next steps/priority areas, we discuss how you can support me in implementing these. I cannot name another service who is working with our setting in such a shared manner at current.

Our school community demonstrated their value of your service through the parent voice gathered recently - please feel comfortable sharing these with others in your team. I think it is important to flag that our school community is incredibly deprived and as a result, families do not find it easy to engage with external professionals. Yet, you ensured that you were friendly and approachable, receiving one of the highest levels of parent feedback we have seen this year from a single event.

The work you undertook to provide, implement and collate pupil, staff and parent voice across the school was more valuable than I could put into words. The outcomes will be discussed in our upcoming SLT meetings and will be featured on next year's school development plan.

Your commitment to our school community shines through in every discussion we have and action you take - highlighted by your upcoming presence at our Summer Fayre!

I feel incredibly proud of the progress we have made as a school with our Mental Health and Wellbeing provisions for children, this is very much due to the support and guidance you have provided over the past 2 years.

In terms of individual support for parents and carers, I have not received ANY negative or uncertain feedback. For my setting, this is notable! Parents who I recognise as reluctant to engage, largely continue to engage with you for the duration of the intervention process, with many requesting more support the following term as they are inspired by what you bring to the sessions and the progress they see their children making.

I cannot thank you enough for the support you have provided and look forward to continuing to work with you next academic year.







Get in contact with us

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t: 01392 386 825

