

The Mental Health Support Team

Covid-19 Newsletter
May 2020

Welcome to our fourth newsletter! During the lockdown and disruption to schools we wanted to share some resources (see hyperlinks) that parents and carers can do at home when looking after their young people to support their wellbeing.

We are still open for referrals for 1:1 support via phone/video call. Please make a referral via our website. Referrals can come from teachers, other professionals, parents/carers or young people themselves.

<https://secureforms.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/mhst/>



A lot of the activities and ideas we suggest are based around the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**: <https://bit.ly/wayswellbeing>

A link to our first **podcast** around how we can use the 5 Ways can be found here: <https://bit.ly/5WaysPod>

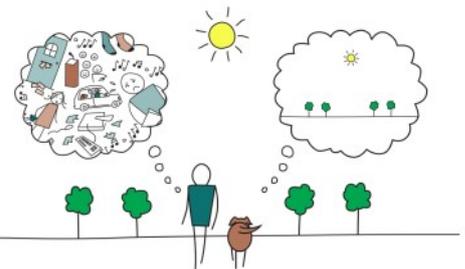
Mindfulness! *Being present & engaging fully in each moment.*

A Gratitude Journal!

Studies show that intentionally recognizing people and experiences that they are thankful for—on a daily or weekly basis—increases mental wellbeing and positive feelings.



A gratitude journal or list is a great activity to do before bedtime, for you to notice more each day and to be mindful of all the things you can be thankful for. It can be a list of 5 things you appreciated and enjoyed that day, e.g. 'I am grateful for the colorful flowers I saw on our walk today'. Try this [31 day gratitude journal](#), or get creative and make your own!



Mind Full, or Mindful?

You can find a [mindful colouring sheet](#) at the end of the newsletter.



Mindful Morning Routine: Try this routine to start your day right!



Waking up. Keeping your eyes closed, take six deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Listen to your breathing and feel your body waking up.

Getting up. As you step out of bed, stand and take a really deep breath, stretch your hands to the ceiling with your fingers pointing upwards, as you exhale, lean forward towards your toes. Make yourself aware of your breathing and how this stretch feels.

Videos & Resources

- ⇒ [Mindfulness: Observing A Train of Thoughts](#)
- ⇒ [FreeMindfulness Free Resources for Mindful Activities](#)

Mindfulness

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Creative!

Affirmation Stones

Colorful [affirmation stones](#) are a fun and simple creative activity. The stones help you to notice and appreciate your positive qualities– they are great for building confidence and self esteem! Stones can also be painted with kind messages for others, with many villages and towns leaving them around for people to look at. Give one as a gift to make their day!



We have made a [page of positive affirmations](#) which you can find at the end of the newsletter!

Try Photography!

[Photography](#) is such a fantastic way to explore and capture the world around you! Try taking your camera around the house, out in the garden, or out on a walk. You might be interested to look back on these photos to see the empty streets or what activities you were doing in lockdown!



You could even try an app that sends you [free prints](#), then put them on your wall!

Active!

Exercise is amazing for mental health as it releases chemical endorphins in the brain which are known to improve our mood.

Ring Toss!

Leave 3 paper plates & paint the rest of the plates, making sure each one is a different colour. Decorate them as you like and then cut out the centre of each so it is a ring.

For the cardboard targets you can use paper towel tubes or empty wrapping paper/tin foil roll. Cut this down to 3 parts. You can make it more challenging by making the tubes into different heights! To finish, take the three paper plates you saved at the beginning and glue each of the cardboard tubes onto them to create your targets, then you are ready to go!



Workout Videos:

- ⇒ [30 Minute Hip-Hop Fit Workout](#)
- ⇒ [20 Minute-Teen-led Workout](#)

be Active!

Try the [Couch to 5k Challenge!](#) Get moving outside in the fresh air, boost your happy hormones, and achieve something fantastic in the process!



Yoga Pose



Tree Pose

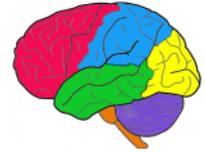
Great for balance, posture and concentration!

Stand up straight. As you breathe out, slowly raise your foot. Bend your knee & place your foot on the inside part of your other leg. Inhale & reach out like branches on a tree with your arms & hands. Exhale, bringing your hands together in front of you. Hold the pose and gaze ahead.

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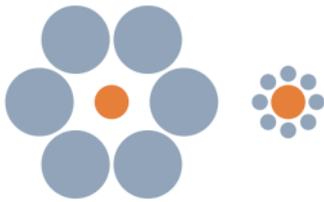
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Science!



Optical Illusions!

An optical illusion is caused by how our visual system is set up, characterized by seeing & perceiving something that differs from reality. These are fun games and it's super interesting to learn why we experience these illusions the way we do!



[8 Optical Illusions Explained!](#) [Create your own Optical Illusions!](#)

[TED Talk: How Optical Illusions Trick Your Brain!](#)

[Optics 4 Kids!](#) - Tons of classic optical illusions and activities such as making a homemade rainbow or Kaleidoscope!



Fun & Games!

Create an Escape Room

Escape rooms are more popular now than ever, and you can still do them even now. There are some fantastic virtual escape rooms to try such as one from [Escape Rooms Durham](#). You can even play with friends at the same time using a videocall app!



You could even try this DIY [murder mystery room](#), or if you're feeling creative you could have a go at making your [own escape room](#) for your family or siblings to try!

Make Cake Pops!

This is such a fantastic time to get into cooking and try new recipes! [Cake pops](#) are a fun challenge, they look great—and they're delicious. You can decorate them with different chocolates and sprinkles to make them unique!



Outside Links

Parent Survey from Oxford University: *Are you a parent of a child or young person in year 0 (reception/foundation) to year 11?* If so please take part in <http://cospaceoxford.com/survey>

Childline: under 19s can call **0800 1111** for free, confidential support

Emerging Minds: <https://bit.ly/EMAnxiety>

BBC Bitesize [Parent Toolkit for Wellbeing](#)

[Self Care](#) Ideas for Children

Supporting Parents who are Worried About Their Children's Well-being during Lockdown [Booklet](#)—Guidance for discussing worries, wellbeing tips etc

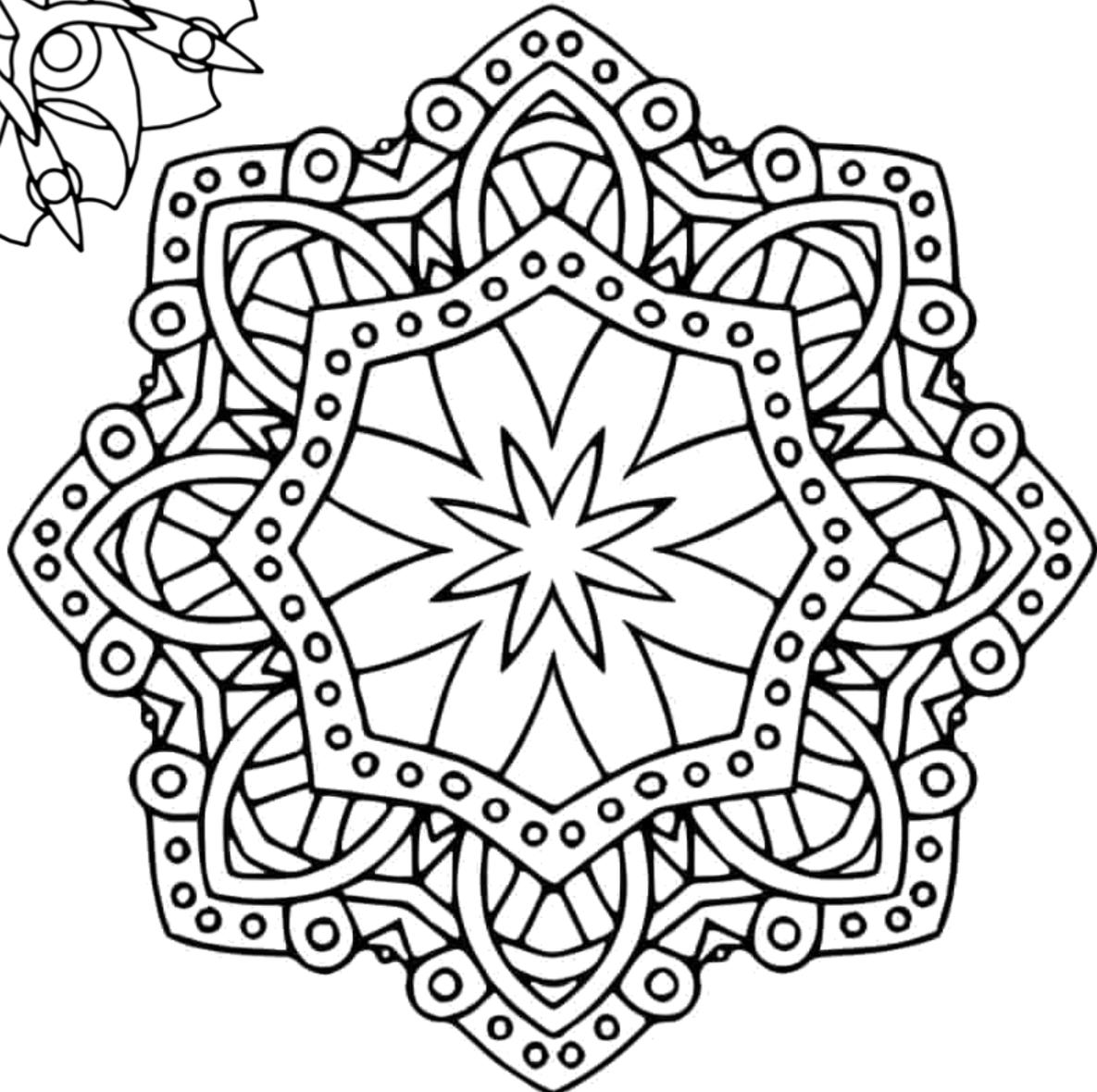
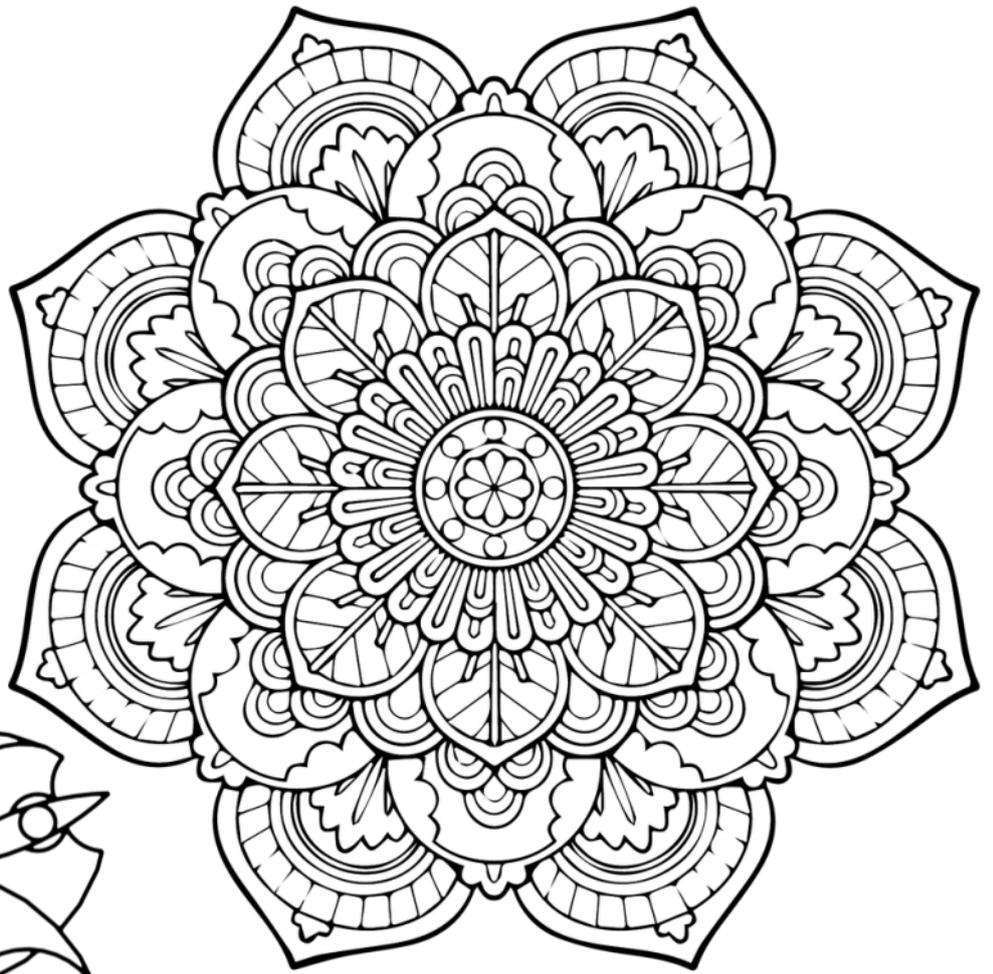
CAMHS Oxfordshire: <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/oxon/>

It's a crisis

If it's an emergency, phone 999. This is if your child's life or the life of another child or young person is at immediate risk.

Call the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Helpline if you need help with a mental health problem. This number replaces 111 for mental health advice in Oxfordshire.

- For children and young people call 01865 904 998



Positive AFFIRMATIONS



Positive affirmations are statements that are repeated to encourage and uplift the person speaking them. Studies show that using positive affirmations can improve confidence, [combat stress](#) and [boost your overall health](#). Give them a go by repeating them to yourself when you're feeling worried or low, when you need a confidence boost, or even in the morning after brushing your teeth!

I am a good friend

I am grateful for what I have

I am loved by myself and others

I am creative

My body can do many things

I can make a difference in the world

I am proud of myself

I take the time to help others

All problems have solutions

I see the good in myself and others

I can do difficult things

I am learning to resolve conflict

It's ok to make mistakes

I enjoy doing....

Mistakes help me learn

I am good at....

I don't compare myself to others

I am working on....

I believe in myself

I see challenges as opportunities

I talk about my feelings

I am unique

I am kind & thoughtful

I have the courage to be myself

I try and maintain a positive attitude

I play well with others

Trying my best is enough

I respect all people and our differences

I am going at my own speed

I appreciate that things take time

Trying my best is enough

I strive for progress, not perfection

I become more confident when I challenge myself

I enjoy learning & helping others learn

I accept who I am and love it—strengths & weaknesses

I accept people have different opinions

I know how to calm down when angry or overwhelmed

I have good intentions

