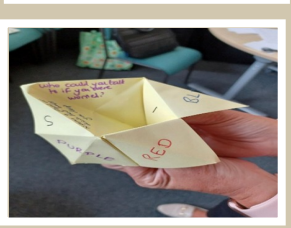
Welcome to the Winter Family Newsletter

December 2025

"Wishing you a relaxing and rejuvenating break." from the Future In Mind Mental Health Support Team



The Future in Mind Mental Health Support Team Offer

The Future in Mind Mental Health Support Team provides early support for mental health and emotional wellbeing for children and young people, as well as helping staff in schools and colleges to provide a consistent "Whole School Approach- WSA" to mental health and wellbeing for students, families and the education staff team.
We offer one to one sessions and small group work for children and young people, as well as assemblies, community events, class-based sessions, parent/carer workshops, parents' evenings and coffee mornings and staff training for common mental health and emotional wellbeing difficulties.

There is a link from our team supporting every mainstream school in the Wakefield district.
If you would like to find out more or if you would like to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's mental health and wellbeing you can speak to your child's **class teacher**, **year lead** or Senior **Mental Health Lead** in school for further information.
Look out for information about forthcoming parent/carer workshops in your child's school, on their website / in the school newsletters.

A great resource – short films for families to learn about common mental health and wellbeing difficulties can be found here - https://nipinthebud.org/films-for-parents-carers/

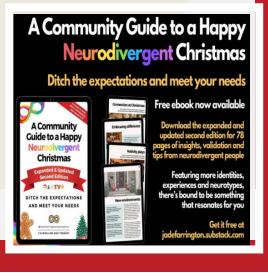
Tips for a neuro divergent Christmas holiday

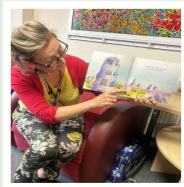
Tracey Jones - Education
Mental Health Practitioner

Big holidays bring with them changes in routine, expectations and social demands. For some children and adults, the temporary decorations and traditions around food, family and gifts can be confusing and even distressing. Every brain and body needs different things to feel safe and included e.g. the toddler may want dim lights and calm spaces, the teen may want to know plans in advance, and grandparents may have definite ideas about who sits where for a special meal.

Being curious, compassionate and willing to accept that there is no 'correct' way of enjoying the holidays can turn an overwhelming, exhausting experience into one that feels supportive, connected and just right.

If you want to explore ditching expectations about what the holidays look like for your family, setting boundaries that respect everyone's needs and new ways to transition back to normal life after the festive season, the free resources below are a good place to start (suitable for everybody, particularly helpful for neurodivergent people).





Thanks Karen, for your wise words on emotional regulation

Let's Get Curious About Hot Feelings

When our Mood Booster team go into primary schools we often hear children share that sometimes our homes can feel a bit loud, busy, or full of big 'hot 'emotions. Sometimes big emotions can be difficult to manage – especially on a morning – things can get heated. We can work together with children to become Emotions Detectives- to help them manage well even when their feelings heat up quickly and seem like they are taking over.

✓ Curiosity Over Control: Encourage exploration of emotions together – you are an Emotions Detective too

✓ Creative Coping Together: Discover calming techniques with your child.

✓ Offer Options: Help children choose calming activities.

Instead of trying to 'fix' a feeling, or to try to force it away – choose ways and times to explore it together.

Stay Present:

➢ Use grounding techniques like walking outside and noticing what's around us, or focusing on physical sensations.

➢ Use visual aids like a feelings chart or scale or pictures of facial expressions to help children learn ways to identify or express intensity of emotions rather than simply naming them.

Soothe the Nervous System:

➢ Gentle distractions (sensory play, storytelling)

➢ Cold sensations (cold drink of water, cold cloths, eating frozen tube of yogurt or a cold hand against the forehead or a set of cold keys behind the neck)

➢ Use a breathing technique with your child (e.g..., hand-breathing, belly-breathing) Comfort and connection

➢ Encourage calming activities: coloring, music, water play, cuddling.

➢ Respect their preferences (for example: lying upside down on the couch).

➢ Support their preferred interests, (hobbies and interests)

➢ Maintain simple, steady routines with flexibility. When new things need to be added to their routine – do trial runs on weekends or holidays

Positive Communication

✓ Use kind words.

✓ Praise small wins and efforts.

✓ Avoid comparisons with other children or parents/carers

FAMILY Horizons wakefieldcouncil

Family Horizons: A Free Resource for Parents and Carers in Wakefield

If your child is struggling with morning routines, experiencing anxiety about school, finding attendance challenging or no longer attending, you're not alone.

Many families navigate these difficulties, and support is available to help you understand and respond to your child's needs.

Family Horizons is a free online supportive course specifically designed for parents and carers whose children are struggling with school attendance.

Whether your child is just beginning to show signs of anxiety or distress about school, or hasn't been able to attend for some time, this course offers gentle, practical support for your family.
For more information and to sign up for this free resource:
https://wakefield.ebsahorizons.org/camhs

The theme for **Children's Mental Health Week 2026** is '**This is My Place**', and the aim is to support the systems around children and young people to help them feel they belong.
There's lots of great resources for families to access just follow the link:

https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/

A range of activities will be taking place on the **22 - 24 December and 2 January 2025** across the district. There are lots of activities on offer including dance, football, arts and crafts, day trips, sports activities, cooking, food and nutrition activities and much more!

https://www.wakefieldfamiliestogether.co.uk/community-support/happy-healthy-holidays/

Lumi Nova is a **FREE** digital therapeutic intervention and supports children aged 7-12 years old facing difficulties with anxiety including:

★ Phobias e.g. Being afraid of spiders or insects, heights, being near dogs, or the dark

★ Social anxiety e.g. Feeling worried about making a mistake at school, going to social events

★ Separation anxiety e.g. Unable to sleep alone, worried about being away from parents and going to school

https://luminova.app/wakefield

The Clothing Bank FIM MHST Donation Station

We have our very own Clothing Bank donation station. We used this to to collect donations from our team for The Clothing Bank Christmas Appeal
The appeal is to help give each Child / Young Person who is supported by the Clothing Bank a brand-new outfit and pyjamas for Christmas, this also includes things like socks, underwear and toiletries.
Our team donated a mammoth amount of pre-loved clothing in September, our biggest donation yet. All thanks to the generosity and passion of the team.
Check out the amazing work the charity does

https://theclothingbank.org.uk/

A Good Night's Sleep Without the Online Gamble

We know that sleep deprivation is an ongoing issue for the children and young people that we support, and their caregivers.

We have recently noticed a worrying trend of families buying melatonin online, particularly the melatonin gummies.

Purchasing medication including melatonin gummies online is a safeguarding concern. These substances are not regulated. There is no understanding of the actual content or safety of them.

Melatonin can only be prescribed by a specialist doctor and requires specific monitoring and considerations and should only be recommended for short term use.

For more information on how to get a better night's sleep naturally follow this link: https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/

For specific information on teen sleep: https://teensleephub.org.uk/

Where to get extra help

If a child or young person is at immediate risk of harming themselves or someone else, please call **999** or take them to **A&E.** You can also contact the **CAMHS Reach Crisis team** between 8am-8apm, seven days a week

Wakefield CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) and CAMHS Reach crisis team. in the event of an urgent mental health enquiry about a child / young person **01924 316200**

If a child or young person needs to talk they can call **Childline** Open 24/7. Chat to a counsellor online at www.childline.org.uk .Call them on **0800 111.**

If a young person or adult needs to talk to someone they can call the **Samaritans** on **116 123**. It's open 24/7.

If a child, young person or parent/carer needs to talk to someone at night time they can call **Night Owls** (between 8pm and 8am) on **0800 1488244**, **text 07984392700 or chat on** www.wynightowls.org.uk.

If a child / young person or adult needs to talk to someone they can text **Shout** on **85258** free,confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

If you need to access help from a **food bank or other services** you can find more information about what's available here https://unitecommunityleedswakefield.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/wakefield-food-aid-guide2-copy.pdf . You could also ask school if they know about other local practical support in your area.

If you need to access help for clothing you can contact The Clothing Bank https://theclothingbank.org.uk/

If you need free confidential and impartial advice you can call **Wakefield District Citizens Advice** on **0800 1448848** (freephone) or visit **Wakefield's Citizens Advice Bureau** (wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)