

*Stillness Junior School  
Special Edition Newsletter*



# Mental Health Awareness

March 2019



This Special Edition Newsletter focuses on mental health, how we can care for and raise our awareness of mental wellbeing.

In a world that has become fast paced and filled with distractions, our thoughts can become tangled, affecting our emotions, and leaving us feeling stressed. This can make our behaviours change and our experiences can become limited. Our mental health helps us to regulate how we handle stress and how we interact in society. It helps us determine how we relate to others and what choices we make.

When we talk about mental health, many people initially think about mental health issues or mental health illness. However, this is only a small part of it. We all have a 'mental health', just as we have a physical health. We are encouraged to eat 'five a day' and exercise to care for our physical well-being. Just as importantly, there are many things we can do to care for our mental wellbeing.

Caring for our mental health helps us handle daily stresses and grow our resilience. Even so, our mental health doesn't always stay the same and can change as we move through different stages of life and meet challenges that life throws at us.

Regular practices and raising our self-awareness helps us to grow and maintain a balanced mental condition that will keep our mind healthy and make us better able to deal with challenges.

In this special edition newsletter I will share some ideas that can help, and how we can learn more about mental health.

*Hazen Suleyman*

## Mindfulness

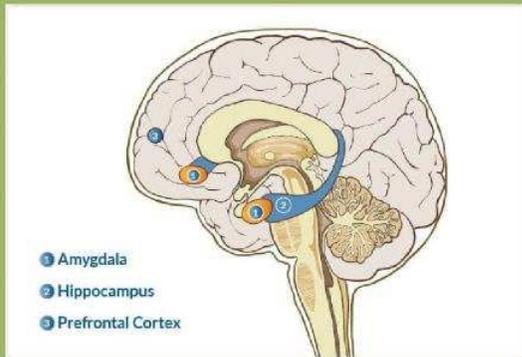


At Stillness Junior School staff practice mindfulness with the children. Mindfulness brings your attention to the present moment, and, if practised regularly, reduces worry and mind chatter, and builds resilience. We found that through daily practise the children are calmer and ready to learn. Their attention is focused and in the present moment, and more interested in learning.

Additionally, they become better equipped to handle social and emotional challenges. If mindfulness is practised when children are not having any challenges, then when they do have a challenge, they will have a reservoir of balance, clarity and calm to call upon.

When these qualities are learnt early in life, children are in a better position to be able to learn, have an effective working memory and deal with social and emotional challenges.

## Mindfulness Changes the Brain



1. The amygdala is triggered when it detects difficult or strong emotions like fear. This part of the brain is less activated following mindfulness.
2. The hippocampus is critical to learning and helps regulate the amygdala. This part of the brain is more active following mindfulness training.
3. The prefrontal cortex is associated with maturity, including regulating emotions and behaviours and making wise decisions. After mindfulness training this part of the brain becomes more activated.

<https://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/research/>



“Mindfulness means the awareness that arises from paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn 1990

*“Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in you way of thinking.”*

*Marcus Aurelius*

More information;

The Mindfulness Project - [www.londonmindful.com](http://www.londonmindful.com)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) - [www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

NHS CAMHS - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

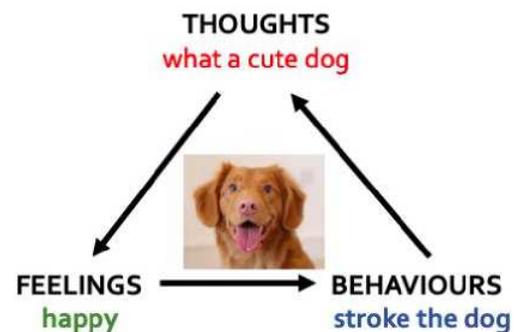
Mental Health in Schools; Make it count - [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

## Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Many of you may already be aware of CBT, which is an approach that helps us understand how thoughts and feelings influence behaviours. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is an umbrella term for many different therapies which share a commonality. Two major contributors to CBT were Albert Ellis and Aaron T. Beck.

The CBT triangle is simple diagram that illustrates and helps us understand how our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are all linked, and influence each other.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/>



Being able to understand what is making you think or feel a certain way will help you choose positive thoughts, which will help us to feel happy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4tAHKn6Sz4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhMm>