



Greater Manchester
Mental Health
NHS Foundation Trust

WIGAN MHST Newsletter

Issue 15: February 2026



Click the logo above to follow us on eventbrite and stay up to date with our upcoming events and parent workshops. Please encourage parents and carers to follow us too!



Click the logo above to access the MHST Padlet for useful information, signposting, referral forms, and previous issues of the newsletter.



Click the image above to share your feedback on the MHST newsletter. We'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions!

Thank you for taking the time to pick up the latest issue of the Wigan MHST newsletter. Spring is on the way which means the nights are finally getting lighter and soon the earth will be in full bloom!



In this issue we are exploring the signs and symptoms of low **self-esteem** and we offer some simple techniques to help boost positivity and self-worth (pp.2-3). We will also be delving into the world of CBT as we focus on **Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)**, including what to look out for and how to support young people who present with these symptoms (pp.4-5). This issue also sees a return to the **Five Ways to Wellbeing**, focusing on learning as a tool to boost your confidence and sense of achievement (p.6).

Over the last few months we have been thrilled to welcome three fabulous **new members of staff** who are joining us as qualified EMHPs. You can learn more about them on page 7. We are also focusing on the important topic of **consent for recording** as our team are often asked to record our sessions with children and young people so that we can continue to develop our skills (see page 8 for further details).



To mark World Sleep Day on 13th March 2026 we are shining a spotlight on our **sleep hygiene workshops** that we can offer to both students and parents. In addition, our **parent workshops** over the Easter holidays will focus on 'Healthy Sleep for Children and Young People' (see page 9 for further details).

In this issue you will also find details of a **participation initiative** which asks young people to identify the spaces that support their wellbeing (see page 10 for more details).

We round off this issue with **useful signposting** covering anti-bullying, bereavement support, support for those affected by domestic abuse, and online safety training (p.11).



We hope that you find this issue helpful. Please contact your school's allocated practitioner for further information on any of the topics that have been covered. Happy reading!

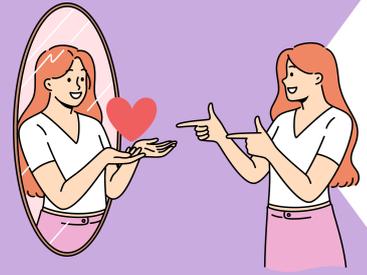
THIS MONTH'S WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH OFFER

- Sleep hygiene workshops
- Self-esteem workshops

Contact your school's allocated practitioner to find out more.



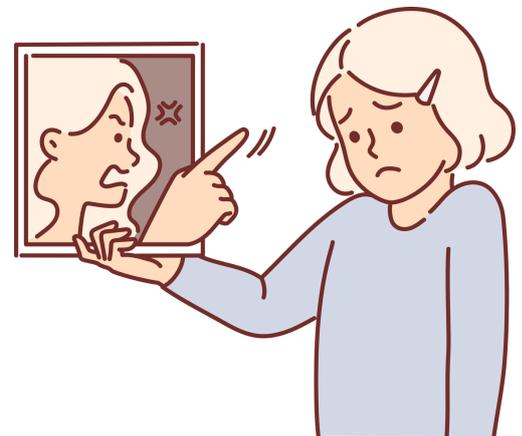
SELF-ESTEEM



Self-esteem is the general impression or view that you have of yourself. It is how you feel about yourself, and your ability to show yourself kindness and compassion. High self-esteem is often associated with resilience and good emotional wellbeing, whereas low self-esteem can often lead to difficulties with anxiety and low mood.

Signs of Low Self-Esteem:

- Disliking yourself.
- Feeling that you are not as good as others.
- Speaking to yourself unkindly.
- Finding it difficult to believe compliments you are given.
- Looking on the worst side of everything.
- Changing or lying about yourself to fit in.
- Wanting others to feel bad about their differences.
- Feeling terrible when you make a small mistake.
- Struggling to bounce back from challenges.



Self-Esteem can be affected by:

- What others say about you.
- Focusing on your achievements or your perceived 'failures.'
- Whether you feel listened to by others.
- Whether you are given attention when you need it.
- Being respected by others, or being criticised and made fun of.
- Friendships or difficulties in relationships.
- Social media and online content.
- Comparing yourself to others.



Looking after the basics helps to lay a solid foundation for positive self-esteem. This includes:

- Eating foods that nourish you and staying hydrated.
- Getting regular exercise (anything from football to dancing around your living room).
- Having a good night's sleep.
- Spending time with the people you care about.
- Doing the things that you enjoy.





IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

You can improve your self-esteem by reflecting on what it is you like about yourself, and identifying your skills and strengths. It is important to celebrate your achievements and to say positive things about yourself, challenging unkind thoughts by weighing up the evidence to prove and disprove them. It is also said that ‘comparison is the thief of joy’ so it is important to avoid comparing yourself to others, and instead, treat yourself like you would treat a friend. It takes time to build self-esteem, but why not start with the following techniques and strategies:



Positive Affirmations:

Identify positive statements you can say to yourself and focus on repeating these statements every day to train your brain to focus on the positives. You could create a positive self-talk flower like the one shown on the left.

Three Good Things:

Identify three good things that have happened every day. The idea behind this technique is to find glimmers of hope and positivity in what you might otherwise perceive as a ‘bad day.’ It doesn’t matter how small your three good things are, for example, maybe it didn’t rain when you walked home or you had a tasty lunch.



Positive Qualities Record:

Respond to questions that help you to identify your positive traits and build your self-esteem e.g. what do you like about yourself? What do others say they like about you? How might someone close to you describe you? What positive qualities do you have? What things are you good at? What things have you achieved in your life? What challenges have you overcome?



BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER (BDD)

WHAT IS BODY DYSMORPHIA?

A mental health condition where a person spends a lot of time worrying about perceived flaws in their appearance. These concerns are often unnoticeable to others but can cause severe distress.

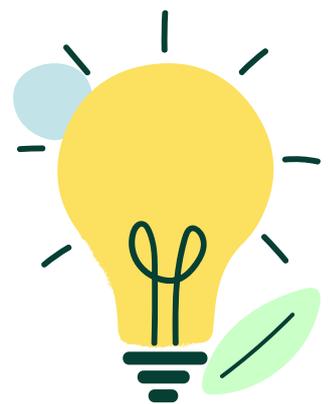


SIGNS YOU MIGHT NOTICE IN SCHOOL

- Frequent comments about appearance or perceived flaws.
- Avoidance of social situations or PE lessons.
- Excessive grooming or mirror checking.
- Anxiety, low mood, or withdrawal.

DID YOU KNOW?

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is often underdiagnosed and is misinterpreted for other presentations such as low mood and social anxiety.



HOW TEACHERS CAN HELP

- Listen without judgement.
- Encourage open conversations about mental health.
- Signpost to useful resources (see page 5).
- Speak to your school's safeguarding lead if you are concerned.



BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER (BDD)

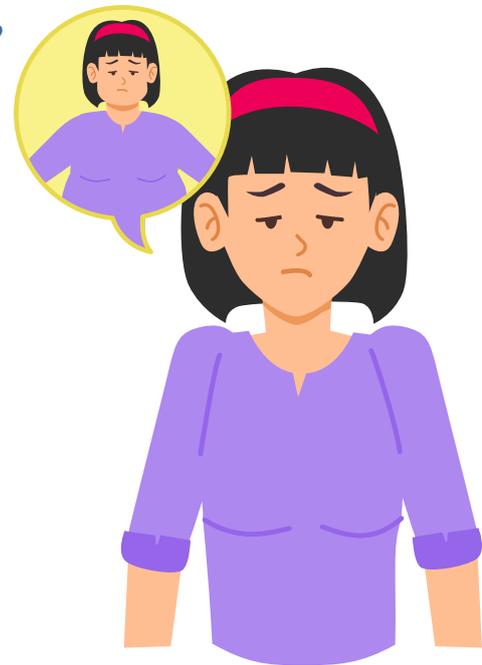
PARENTS: WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR AT HOME

Concern with appearance: Is your child very worried about their appearance in any way? Are they unhappy with how they look? Is there lots of negative self talk regarding their appearance?

Preoccupation: Do they spend lots of time talking about their appearance? Does this distract them from day to day life?

Behaviours: Do they carry out behaviours or mental acts (e.g. checking mirrors, extensive grooming routines, comparing themselves) to 'fix' or hide their appearance?

Distress/impairment: How much distress or impairment do appearance worries/behaviours cause your child's relationships/school/work?



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Wigan MHST can offer CBT for Body Dysmorphic Disorder. If you know a young person who experiences these symptoms, and they meet the MHST criteria, you can consider making a referral to our team.

BDD foundation: www.bddfoundation.org

OCD Action (including local and online support groups):
www.ocdaction.org.uk

Video - 'Because I'm Ugly' - BDD and Me:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lopYXHID39I>

Video - 'Body Dysmorphia Robbed Me of My Teenage Years':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ZrjmeBZUeb8>

THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

KEEP LEARNING



WHAT ARE THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING?

The five-ways to wellbeing are simple steps you can take in order to improve how you feel each day. They don't take up much time and don't have to cost anything. They are: Take Notice, Connect, Keep Learning, Give to Others and Be Active. This month we are focusing on:

KEEP LEARNING



Learning new skills has been proven to boost our confidence and give us a sense of achievement. It can also be a good way to meet new people and try something new which in turn improves our wellbeing. It doesn't have to be in a formal setting, it can be as simple as picking up a book or researching something you're curious about.

You can access free, government-funded courses for adults in England here: <https://freecoursesinengland.co.uk/>

Sign up for a Mind Ed account to access free courses and learn more about mental health: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

<input type="checkbox"/>	LEARN AN INSTRUMENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	TAKE AN ONLINE COURSE
<input type="checkbox"/>	REDISCOVER A HOBBY
<input type="checkbox"/>	VISIT A MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/>	COOK A NEW RECIPE
<input type="checkbox"/>	JOIN A LOCAL CLASS





MEET OUR NEW STAFF!



My name is **Alyssa**, I am thrilled to be joining Wigan MHST as an Education Mental Health Practitioner.

I completed my training last year whilst working in Sefton. Prior to my training, I gathered lots of valuable experience supporting children and young people with their mental health as a crisis line volunteer, teaching assistant, and as a support worker in an A&E mental health team. Whilst working in these roles, seeing the world through the eyes of the children and young people I was supporting allowed me to understand the challenges children and young people face in the world today. This led me into my training year, as I wanted to further understand how we can support children and young people, and champion the resilience they show.

I am excited to get to know and work with the schools, children, young people and families in the Wigan area!

Outside of work, I am often found lost in a book, swimming, at the gym, or spending time with my lovely dog Stanley.

Hi my name is **Sarah** and I am a Qualified Education Mental Health Practitioner who has newly begun working at Wigan MHST. I previously worked and lived in Leicestershire where I completed my EMHP training. Leicester and the midlands will always be home for me, but I fancied a change as I move into the next part of my life.

I am an avid reader and managed to finish 33 books last year! (I am trying to finish 40 this year) I am super crafty and enjoy getting lost in my crochet projects. I have a big passion for music and enjoy attending festivals, gigs and raves. I also love yoga and mindfulness.

I have a big passion for wellbeing and think it's so important to spend time nurturing ourselves as well as others. I can't wait to get stuck in and work with you all!



Hello, my name is **Lucy**, and I'm thrilled to be joining the team as an Education Mental Health Practitioner.

My passion for supporting children and young people's wellbeing began during my studies in Psychotherapy and Counselling at university. I qualified as an EMHP in 2023, gaining valuable experience delivering evidence-based support in school settings. Following this, I moved into a role within CAMHS, where I worked with children and young people at Tier 3, supporting those with complex mental health needs.

Outside of work, I enjoy reading, going to the gym, attending concerts and travelling to new places.

I'm delighted to be returning to my role as an EMHP with Wigan MHST and I'm really looking forward to working alongside staff, children, and families across our schools.



EVENTS



CHECK OUT THIS HALF TERM'S IMPORTANT
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS EVENTS



13TH MARCH 2026

WORLD SLEEP DAY

World Sleep Day aims to remind us of the critical role sleep plays in our mental and physical wellbeing. The day was founded by The World Sleep Society and further information can be found on their [website](#).

There are also a fantastic range of resources, including a free e-book, on the Teen Sleep Hub [website](#).



CONSENT FOR RECORDING

When accessing support with Wigan MHST, young people may be asked by their practitioner if they give consent to be recorded. This means that the practitioner would like to video record the intervention they are completing with the young person, because they are a trainee and need to evidence their work with young people to pass their course, or they are a qualified practitioner looking to continue to improve their skills in supporting young people. Recordings are shared with university courses for marking or with supervisors within Wigan MHST to reflect on the practitioner's skills. It is the practitioner that will be the focus of the video and how they are supporting the young people they are working with.

Practitioners video record assessments and sessions on work laptops - don't worry there isn't a film crew in the room! The practitioner will make sure that the young person feels comfortable and that they will not be able to see themselves being recorded on the screen.



Young people will never be pressured into consenting to record sessions and it will not impact their treatment if they decide they do not wish to be recorded. If they do consent to being recorded, young people and their parents/carers will be asked to sign a consent form. The practitioner will be more than happy to chat with them and give them all the information they need before they decide.

It would be helpful if you could speak to young people about this prior to making a referral to Wigan MHST.

PARENT WORKSHOPS



PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH PARENTS AND CARERS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO [CLICK HERE TO BOOK TICKETS FOR OUR PARENT WORKSHOPS](#)

HEALTHY SLEEP FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We are offering a practical workshop designed to help parents and carers promote effective sleep routines for children and young people.



What will be explored?

- Understanding the science of sleep.
- Exploring the importance of sleep for both physical and mental health.
- Developing practical routines and strategies to improve your child's sleep.



Why attend?

This is a great opportunity to gain insights, ask questions, and learn tools that promote healthier sleep routines. Following the workshop you will walk away with practical strategies which you and your young person can implement to support with getting more effective sleep.

STAY TUNED

Further details of our upcoming Healthy Sleep Workshops will be shared with schools and colleges shortly. Please keep an eye on your emails for updates.

Parents and carers can also follow our [Eventbrite](#) page to be notified of upcoming events.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

SLEEP HYGIENE WORKSHOPS

With World Sleep Day coming up on the 13th March 2026, the MHST team can offer sleep hygiene workshops to help facilitate this learning with your students. We can explore why sleep is important, what can be done before bed time to help with our sleep, and also what we can do during the day to help with our sleep.

This workshop aims to make sleep hygiene relevant to young people, as we explore sleep in relation to their school work, but also the negative impact of screen time and energy drinks when it comes to getting a good night's sleep.

We can offer practical tips for those who may be struggling with their sleep. Please speak to your school's allocated practitioner for more information.



"THIS IS MY PLACE" CALL OUT

What spaces and places in Greater Manchester support your mental health and wellbeing

Where makes you feel this "This is My Place?"

Where do you feel safe, joy or a sense of belonging?

To mark Children's and Young People's Mental Health Week and this year's theme 'This Is My Place', we're inviting young people across Greater Manchester to share the spaces and places that support your wellbeing.

A place you can unwind, feel heard, understood and belong. Somewhere you go to create, connect, move, learn or just be.

Are there also places you'd like to access but don't feel you can or they are not available - we would like to hear about these too?

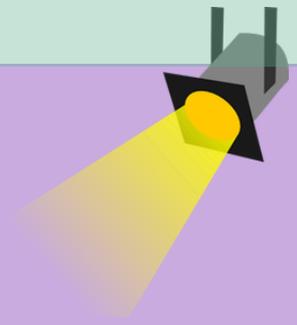
If you would like to share your voice and place you can submit as a group or individually:

- A photo, piece of artwork, a video or voice note
- Alongside a short quote, poem or reflection.

To wiganmhstparticipation@gmmh.nhs.uk by March 20th 2026.

A selection will be showcased online and during *the FUTURE IS OURS** festival and symposium with The Horsfall so young people's voices help shape what happens next.

SIGNPOSTING SPOTLIGHT



Kidscape offer free online workshops called ZAP for young people aged 9-17 and parents/ carers focusing on understanding bullying roles, raising self-esteem, assertiveness skills, and positive body language. Visit: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>



Talk Grief offer free grief activities, advice and support to young people aged 13-25. Young people can speak to a bereavement specialist without the need for a referral via live chat, email, text, and WhatsApp. Visit: <https://www.talkgrief.org/>



Trauma-informed child-centred support for young people aged 5-16 who have been impacted by domestic abuse. Support is delivered over 6 x 60 minute sessions in the school setting. Email: CYPsupport@diasduc.org to request further information and a referral form.



Free e-mentoring service providing advice and support for young people aged 9+ who have been affected by bullying. Email: mentorsonline@bulliesout.com
Visit: <https://bulliesout.com/>



Kooth offer free workshops and assemblies for schools on topics such as staying safe online, navigating feelings, smartphone safety for parents and staff, and a guide to talking to your child and managing emotions. Email Layla for more information: Lfarahzady@kooth.com

