



NHS
Greater Manchester
Mental Health
NHS Foundation Trust

WIGAN MHST Newsletter

Issue 16: April 2026



Welcome to the 16th issue of the Wigan MHST newsletter. We hope that you have had a restful Easter break and are feeling the benefit of the longer days and lighter nights.

In this issue we will be focusing on the topic of 'anger.' Whilst one-to-one support with managing anger is not a part of our core offer, it is something that is repeatedly requested by schools and colleges. To respond to this identified need we have created some exciting new workshops. We will be delivering the 'Understanding and Managing Anger' workshop to parents and carers for the first time at the Family Hubs during the May half-term. We are also pleased to offer this workshop directly to schools, as well as a student workshop aimed at Year 5 and 6 students. Further information on these workshops can be found on page 5. Please speak to your school's allocated practitioner to express your interest. We have included some useful information on understanding and managing anger on pages 2-3 of this issue.

Anger is often very closely linked to feelings of distress and overwhelm and in this issue we will also look at how creating a 'self-soothe' kit can help to manage these difficult feelings. In our regular Five Ways to Wellbeing feature, we will be focusing on 'Taking Notice' which encourages you to pay attention to what is going on around you, helping to slow down your racing mind and regulate your emotions.

April is a busy month for events! In this issue we will be highlighting the importance of supporting children and young people who have a parent, sibling, or family member in The British Armed Forces, by offering some useful information and resources for the Month of the Military Child (page 7). April also marks Autism Awareness Month and we're shining the spotlight on useful services and resources to support young people with autism on page 9. As we move into May The Mental Health Foundation are once again promoting Mental Health Awareness Week (11th-17th May). This year's theme is 'taking action' which is all about us taking active steps to achieve good mental health for all (see page 8 for more information).

We hope you enjoy this issue and find the information and signposting to be beneficial. Please don't forget to leave us some feedback by clicking the online survey image on the left.

THIS MONTH'S WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH OFFER

- Anxiety staff training
- Staff wellbeing workshops

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



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!



UNDERSTANDING ANGER



Anger is a normal emotion that ranges from mild irritation to intense fury. It is a difficult feeling that can make us say and do things that we later regret. Anger can gradually build up over time leading to explosions if we don't learn how to manage it. It is also important to note that anger can often be displaced e.g. a child might get told off in class and then take this out on their family.

Symptoms of anger:

- Feeling frustrated, impatient, or irritated.
- Increased heart rate, rapid breathing, feeling hot, sweating, muscle tension.
- Impulsivity and difficulty thinking clearly.
- Arguing or being aggressive or violent e.g. swearing, throwing things, hitting others.
- Bullying or hurting someone's feelings.
- Isolating self or ignoring others.



Anger Iceberg

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface.

Angry

embarrassed
shame
distrustful
attacked
guilt
trauma
disrespected
disappointed
uncomfortable
regret

scared
tricked
frustrated
grumpy
trapped
annoyed
unsure
lonely
worried

grief
overwhelmed
depressed
stressed
rejected
nervous
exhausted
helpless
anxious
envious
offended
insecure
hurt

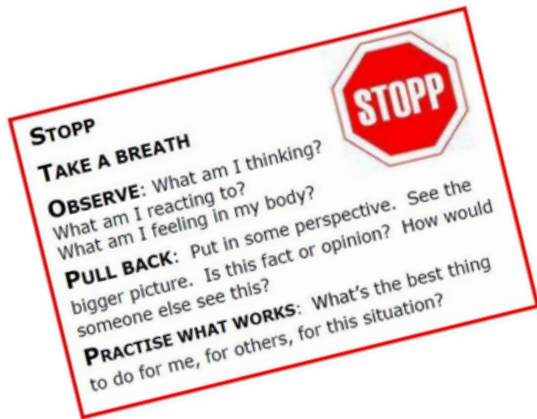
The Anger Iceberg

This diagram demonstrates the idea that there are often other emotions at play when someone demonstrates anger.

On the surface is the outward display of behaviour e.g. slamming doors, ignoring people, arguing etc. Underneath the surface are underlying emotions which might not be picked up on by others. This is the individual's internal experience. For example, they might be tired, hungry, worried, sad, embarrassed, or disappointed.

It is important to give children and young people the vocabulary to be able to accurately convey their feelings, as addressing these underlying emotions can help to prevent anger outbursts. You could try using a feelings wheel or emotion flash cards.

MANAGING ANGER



STOP

When anger arises it is important that the individual gives themselves time to calm down and self-regulate to help them identify the best way to respond. Encourage young people to imagine they are pushing a giant stop button when they recognise the early warning signs of anger.

Be Your Own Therapist

Once the individual is in a state of calm they can try offering themselves some advice on how to become less angry in the future. It can be helpful to imagine they are a friend who has their best interests at heart.

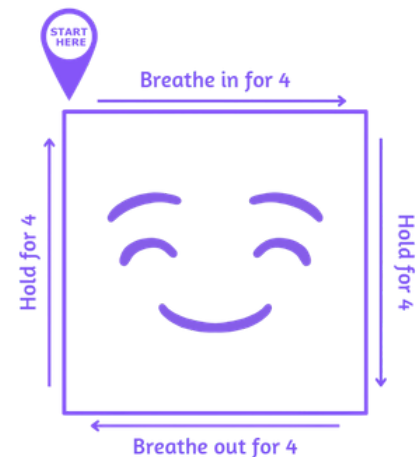


Relax

It is important for young people to identify the activities that they enjoy that can help them to relax and take their mind off things. This could be anything from playing netball, yoga, reading, doing a face mask, listening to music, making crafts etc.

Breathing Techniques

Deep breathing techniques can be used to help lower your heart rate, slow down your breathing, and reduce feelings of anger. They can help you to stop, take a step back, and achieve a moment of calm before responding. An example of a deep breathing exercise is shown on the right.



SELF-SOOTHE KIT

A SELF-SOOTHE BOX CAN HELP YOU TO RELAX AND REDUCE ANXIETY AND PANIC.



Self-soothe boxes are unique to each individual and are great for all ages. It can be difficult to identify what helps you when you are in distress or overwhelmed. Creating a self-soothe kit in advance will help you feel more prepared during moments of distress/overwhelm.

A self-soothe kit can help you tap into the things that help you feel grounded and calmer, without having to scramble around for activities and distractions that might not be as helpful.

WHAT TO PUT IN YOUR SELF-SOOTHE KIT

TIP: USE YOUR 5 SENSES TO HELP

Sight: A photo of your family, happy place, or happy memory; Colouring books; Fidget spinner; Sand timer.



Touch: Stress ball; Puzzle book; Prickly ball; Playing cards; Favourite blanket; Jumper; Eye mask; String of beads.



Sound: Head phones to play your favourite music or podcast; Listen to ASMR sounds; Listen to nature sounds; Noise cancelling headphones; Ear plugs.



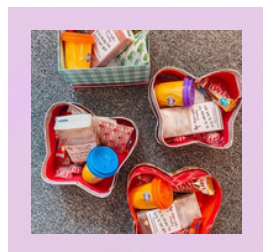
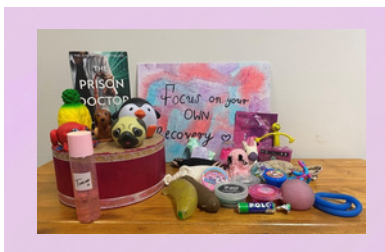
Taste: Your favourite snack or drink; Strong mints; Boiled sweets; Gummy sweets



Smell: Scented candle; Scented hand cream; Scented rice bag.



EXAMPLES OF SELF-SOOTHE KITS



PARENT WORKSHOPS



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

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING ANGER

This workshop aims to help parents and carers improve their understanding of the triggers and symptoms of anger, as well as exploring underlying emotions. Parents and carers will leave with practical ideas and strategies to help young people prevent and manage outbursts of anger.



What will be covered?

- What is anger? What is irritability?
- Where does anger come from?
- The anger iceberg
- Preventative measures
- Anger management strategies
- Understanding the impact of our responses
- Signposting for additional support



Tuesday 26th May 4:30-5:30pm
The Meadows Family Hub

Tuesday 26th May 4-5pm
Hindley (Morningson Road)
Family Hub

Wednesday 27th May 6-7pm
Westleigh Family Centre

Thursday 28th May 1-2pm
Clifton Street Family Hub

Thursday 28th May 2-3pm
Atherton (Formby Avenue) Family
Hub

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

We are excited to be able to offer two brand new workshops to schools:

Understanding and Managing Your Child's Anger

Target Audience: Parents and Carers

This workshop mirrors our Family Hub offer above. We will explore the signs and symptoms of anger, possible triggers, and learn more about the emotions which often underpin anger. Parents and carers will leave the workshop with practical tools and strategies to support their child in managing their anger.



Understanding and Managing Anger for Students

Target Audience: Year 5 and 6

This 1-hour interactive workshop aims to improve students' knowledge of anger by exploring the signs and symptoms, and using the iceberg metaphor to gain a deeper understanding of underlying emotions. Students will be given the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of anger using tools such as the anger thermometer. The workshop will also give students the opportunity to try out practical coping strategies such as progressive muscle relaxation, breathing techniques, and mindfulness exercises.

THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

TAKE NOTICE

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:



TAKE NOTICE



Taking notice encourages you to strengthen your wellbeing and practice mindfulness by savouring the present moment. Spring is the perfect time to start taking notice. Take a walk outside and admire the changing colours of the season, listen to the sound of the birds joyfully singing in the trees, and embrace the feeling of the cool breeze on your skin.

Getting out into nature is a fantastic way to slow down and improve your wellbeing. The simple act of getting a change of scenery and breathing in some fresh air can make the world of difference.

However, you don't need to schedule in a huge hike to seek the benefits of mindfulness. Why not try one of these strategies:

The 'First Sip' Rule: focus entirely on the temperature and taste of your morning coffee before opening your inbox.

Window Gazing: spend one minute watching the clouds or trees during a break to reset your visual focus, which is particularly beneficial after spending a lot of time staring at screens.

Corridor Check-In: notice the sensation of your feet on the floor, rather than rehearsing your next lesson. Use the five senses to scan the environment around you, and notice the change in air temperature as you move through the school or step outside for a break.



APRIL IS THE...

Children who have a parent, sibling or family member who works in The British Armed Forces (The Royal Navy and The Royal Marines, The British Army and The Royal Airforce), are not alone. It is estimated that there are 174,000 young people with a parent working in The British Armed Forces in the UK. A young person with an armed forces family member may have additional and **unique life experiences** that may impact upon the way they feel and/ or their mental health such as:

- Time away from a parent with infrequent, little or no contact for long periods of time.
- Worrying about the safety of a parent who has been deployed.
- Frequent moving of house and changing schools (with possible gaps in education).
- Moving away from and having to make new friends.
- Moving away from hobbies and activities.
- Caring for other siblings or family members.
- Coping with uncertainty and unpredictability.
- Experiencing and adjusting to traumatic illness, injury or bereavement
- Challenges relating to their identity and sense of belonging.



Ideas to kickstart: Month of the Military Child 2026

The Month of the Military Child is an opportunity to celebrate Service children and show them that they are a valuable member of the school community. Here are some ideas to try out during April.

1. 24th April is '**Purple Up! Day**'. Ask pupils to wear something purple (the colour of #MotMC) and hold an assembly highlighting positive stories about their lives. Use this to share good news stories about your school with families and the local media. Tag events you are running or participating in with the hashtag #MotMC or #monthofthemilitarychild.
2. Put on a **breakfast event**. Include all parents associated with the armed forces. Don't forget to invite staff who were once Service children too!
3. The charity **Never Such Innocence** is running an **art/ poetry competition** throughout April about Service children. Visit <https://www.neversuchinnocence.com/month-of-the-military-child> for more details.
4. Highlight April as '**Month of the Military Child**' on the school's website. Discuss what support you can offer, particularly with families new to the area.
5. Consider hosting a '**person in uniform day**'. Invite a serving mother or father to come to the school to read to children or talk about their role in the Services either in class or during an assembly.
6. "**Share Your Story**" project: Get children to think about their life experience and how they might share this with the rest of the class. Children can create artwork or a journal about their experiences.
7. Create a **Time Zone Wall**: A series of clocks on a wall identifying different time zones from around the world, with a focus on where Service children have lived before is a great conversation starter.

Service children can face challenges with parents in the armed forces. Yet these children are an amazing asset to families, schools and the local community. The Month of the Military Child helps us to remember this and helps us celebrate their achievements.



Useful Links:

<https://militarychild.org/resource/momc-toolkit/>

<https://aff.org.uk/advice/health-and-additional-needs/mental-health/>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/supporting-military-families>

<https://www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk/child-under-12-years/military-families>

<https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help/resource-hub/support-available-to-children-of-veterans/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/month-of-the-military-child>

For further information contact: **People-AFFS-Education-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk**

EVENTS



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



APRIL

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Autism Awareness Month aims to raise understanding, acceptance, and advocacy for individuals with autism. It also focuses on celebrating the unique strengths of individuals on the autism spectrum. More information and free resources can be found on the National Autistic Society [website](#).

11TH - 17TH MAY

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

This is an opportunity to tackle the stigma around mental health by educating others and encouraging people to prioritise their own mental health and wellbeing. Further information and resources can be found below and on The Mental Health Foundation [website](#).

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK



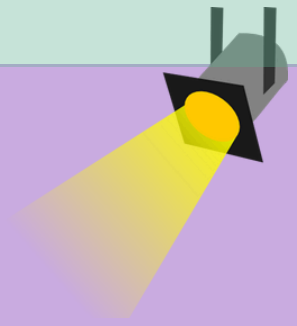
Mental Health Awareness Week is hosted by the Mental Health Foundation every year to promote awareness of good mental health. This year's theme is 'take action', which focuses on going a step beyond awareness, and taking action to effect real change. So how can you get involved?

Take Action For Yourself: choose one positive action that will help you to boost your mental health e.g. try a new hobby, practice gratitude, or introduce a relaxing evening routine.

Take Action For Someone Else: reflect on what you can do to help build mentally healthy communities, workplaces, and schools. This is a good opportunity to think about the role of Mental Health Ambassadors within your setting. You could also take part in 'Wear it Green Day' on Thursday 14th May, and consider hosting an event such as a bake sale, quiz, or scavenger hunt.

Take Action For All Of Us: encourage those in power to take action to ensure good mental health for everyone in the UK.

SIGNPOSTING SPOTLIGHT



SEND
Local Offer Live
Support for now and the future

Children First Wigan Council

Do you, or someone you care for, have a special educational need and/or a disability?

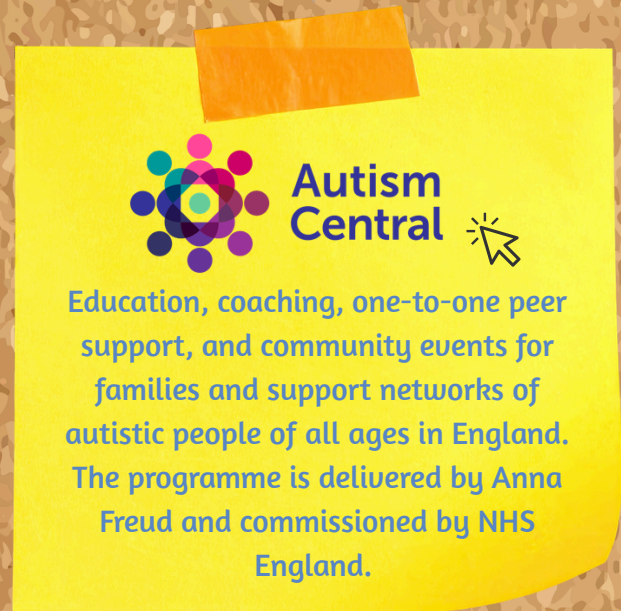
Join us at our FREE Local Offer Live event to explore the SEND services available in Wigan Borough. Meet professionals, speak to service providers, and take part in workshops throughout the day.

Monday 27 April 2026

10am – 2:30pm and 3:30pm – 6:30pm

Leigh Sports Village, Leigh, WN7 4JY

Find out more at www.wigan.gov.uk/LocalOfferLive



Autism Central

Education, coaching, one-to-one peer support, and community events for families and support networks of autistic people of all ages in England. The programme is delivered by Anna Freud and commissioned by NHS England.



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Embrace offer online workshops for parents and carers on the following topics: understanding ADHD, understanding Autism, sleep issues, and responding to behaviour. Further information is available here:

<https://www.embracewiganandleigh.org.uk/behaviour-support-workshops/>



RIDING THE RAPIDS



This 9-week course covers different aspects of understanding and managing the behaviour of children with Autism or another disability. There are primary age and teenage courses available. Parents and carers can self-refer using the following email address:

earlyhelpdevelopmentteam@wigan.gov.uk

