

Self-help Apps

Mind shift



Helps you learn how to relax, develop more helpful ways of thinking, and identify active steps that will help you take charge of your Anxiety.

Headspace



Teaches you the basics of meditation and mindfulness.

Stop, think, breath

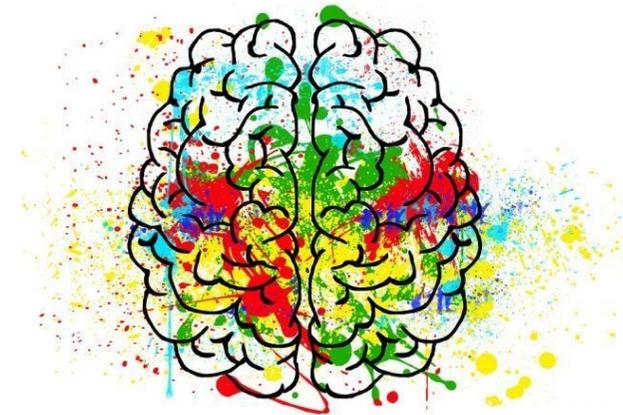


Stop, Breathe & Think, the app for meditation & mindfulness, has a unique approach that allows you to check in with your emotions



Helpful tools and information for Parents and Carers

Puberty and Hormones



What is Puberty?

This aim of this booklet is to provide Parents and Carers with some information and advice around what Puberty is, the effects it has on the brain and how it can affect a young person's mood and emotions.

Although Puberty causes big changes to the body as well as emotions, this booklet focuses on the changes that occur in the brain and hormone production, and what this means for how young people think and feel.

During Puberty, the body is maturing into adulthood, and the brain is growing and transforming to become more efficient and support these physical changes. As a result, lots of aspects of a young person's life can feel different, including their sleeping patterns, relationships and overall mood.

It is important that we have a good understanding of what happens during Puberty to make sure we are aware of the changes young people are going through and what we can do to support them.

"No matter when you were born or where, puberty is the same. It was the same for your parents as it is for you - what's happening in your body dictates everything"

-Francine Pascal, Author



How can I
help?

IT'S
OKAY

* TO MAKE MISTAKES
* TO HAVE BAD DAYS
* TO BE LESS THAN PERFECT
* TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU
* TO BE YOURSELF.

Below are a number of strategies that we recommend to young people to support themselves. Encourage and remind young people of them and talk about how helpful they can be. It is also worth noting that these strategies work for everyone, so give them a try yourself!

- **Take care of yourself!** With all the pressures and stresses that come with puberty, it is important to look after yourself. Try to eat healthily and sleep well. Take the time you need to relax by exercising, having a hot bath or shower, reading, watching TV or finding what works for you.
- **Meditate or practice mindfulness** - Meditation and Mindfulness help you to take a step back, become more in tune with your emotions and relax. You can use a number of Apps to help guide you through this, such as Headspace; Stop, Breath, Think; or Mind Shift.
- **Exercise** - Exercise has been scientifically proven to give you more energy and boost your mood. It could also be a great opportunity to socialise and meet new people.
- **Breathing Strategies and Relaxing** - Deep breaths in for 4 counts, hold for 4 and out for 4. Imagine breathing in calm (give it a smell and colour) and blowing away the worries when breathing out. Make a stressball or squishy toy.

Serotonin

- Serotonin is another hormone that affects our mood and wellbeing. Balanced levels of serotonin help us feel happy, motivated and energised, but an imbalance can make us feel low, tired and unhappy.
- Serotonin levels naturally increase during Puberty, and may make young people feel low and unhappy more than usual.
- To support your young person, it can be helpful to model and encourage eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and sleeping well to try and maintain a balanced level of serotonin.



Oxytocin

- Oxytocin is a hormone that helps us to form relationships and friendships. It supports pair-bonding and helps us feel closer to our friends and family.
- Oxytocin levels rise during Puberty, and so this may explain why young people feel closer to their friends and want to spend more time with them during this age.



What's going on in the brain?

- At some point between the ages of 10 and 16, the brain begins to change and develop as we reach adulthood. The process of Puberty is triggered by a release of different hormones in the brain. A Hormone is a type of chemical in our body and brain that tell us how to behave, feel and think.
- You may have heard of Testosterone, Oestrogen or Progesterone before. These are the hormones that cause the most physical changes during puberty, and can cause young people to feel emotional or grumpy and have mood swings. There are also changes in the levels of other hormones. The next few pages of this booklet will explain the functions of a number of different hormones and what effect they have on how we feel and behave.
- As well as changes in hormones, during puberty the part of the brain which controls emotions is dominant whilst the part of the brain for thinking clearly and making decisions is still developing. This makes young people more likely to engage in risky behaviours and feel emotions much more strongly.



Melatonin

- Melatonin is a hormone that helps us regulate our sleep cycle. When the body releases higher levels of melatonin this triggers a want to sleep, and lower levels indicate it is time to wake up.
- During puberty, melatonin levels increase later at night and fall later in the morning. This makes young people want to stay up later at night and sleep longer the next morning.
- Doctor's recommend teenagers should get a minimum of 8 to 9 hours sleep each day, but most only get around 7 hours due to having to fit around school timetables.
- When young people don't get enough sleep, they struggle to concentrate and regulate emotions. As well as this, it can cause an increase in impulsive behaviours, irritability and low mood.
- As a result, it is important that you encourage your young person to maintain a healthy sleeping pattern, and take steps to support this such as limiting access to electronic devices after a certain time before bed.



Dopamine

- It is Dopamine's job to help our body manage feelings of stress. It also helps us to concentrate and control our impulses.
- During puberty, levels of Dopamine are higher. Due to this, when young people face stressful situations, higher dopamine levels can cause them to feel more anxious or low in mood too.
- It is important for young people to recognise that sometimes these feelings are normal, and to help them to feel better you could encourage them to talk about how they're feeling, and take time out to relax, rest or do something fun.

Endorphins

- Endorphins are your body's natural 'happy' hormones. They are released when we feel stress or pain to help us feel better and get through it!
- Luckily, we can do activities to help release endorphins which will help to lift our mood. Some examples include doing exercise, meditation, and even eating spicy foods!



Cortisol

- Cortisol is a hormone that is released to tell our body when we are feeling stressed. During puberty, the levels of cortisol naturally increase, so a young person might feel stressed out or worried by things they felt they could manage previously.
- It is important for young people to remember this worry can be completely normal, so encourage them to talk to friends or family about how their feelings.

