

# 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 to help you understand

# Puberty and Hormones



## What is Puberty?

This aim of this booklet is to give young people a better understanding of what Puberty is, the effects it has on our brain and how it can affect our mood and emotions.

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

During Puberty, our body is maturing into adulthood, and our brain is growing and transforming to become more efficient and support these physical changes. As a result, lots of aspects of our day to day life can feel different, including our 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 we are going through and why we feel the way we do.

*“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**



What could I  
do to feel  
better?

- **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, 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, you can find some examples on the back of this leaflet.
- **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.

**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.

# 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 and tired and unhappy.
- Serotonin levels naturally increase during Puberty, and may make us feel low and unhappy more than usual. It is important to maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly and sleep 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 we feel closer to our friends and want to spend more time with them during this age.



What's going on in my brain?

- When we reach Adolescence, our brains begin to change and develop to help us reach adulthood. The process of Puberty is triggered by a release of different hormones in our brain. A Hormone is the name we give to types of chemicals 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 us 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 our brain which controls our emotions is in charge whilst the part of our brain for thinking clearly and making decisions is still developing. This makes us more likely to engage in risky behaviours and feel emotions much more strongly.



# Melatonin

- Melatonin is a hormone that tells us when we are feeling tired and when it is time to wake up in the morning. When we make more melatonin, that tells us its time to sleep, and less means we need to wake up.
- During puberty, melatonin levels increase later at night and fall later in the morning. This makes you 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 a night, but most only get around 7 hours due to having to fit in their busy lifestyles.
- When we don't get enough sleep, it makes it much harder to concentrate and manage our emotions. As well as this, it can cause an increase in impulsive behaviours, irritability and low mood.



# 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 we experience things that make us stressed, higher dopamine levels can cause us to feel more anxious or low in mood.
- It is important to recognise that sometimes these feelings are normal, and to help ourselves feel better we need to 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 you might feel stressed out or worried by things you felt you could manage previously.
- It is important to remember this worry can be completely normal, so it may help to talk to friends or family about how you are feeling.

