



Greater Manchester  
Mental Health  
NHS Foundation Trust

# WIGAN MHST Newsletter

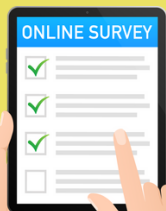
Issue 12: September 2025



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!

Welcome to issue 12 of the Wigan MHST Newsletter! We hope you have had an enjoyable summer break and are feeling well rested ready for the academic year ahead.

We have listened to your feedback and we are moving to half-termly issues of our newsletter to offer more advanced notice of upcoming events and our popular parent workshops.

In this issue we offer some top tips for students managing the return to school, and Participation Champion Az takes a detailed look at what makes a trusted adult. October plays host to BFRB awareness week so we will explore what BFRBs are and how to manage them, as well as highlighting some useful signposting. This issue also sees the start of an exciting new series focusing on The Five Ways to Wellbeing, starting with 'being active.' We'll even give you an insight on what our team are doing to stay active.



On page 8 you will find details of our upcoming parent workshops at the Family Hubs, as well as information on the support we can offer to Mental Health Ambassadors within your schools. We are also shining a spotlight on upcoming events and useful signposting on pages 9 and 10, which will be a regular feature of the newsletter going forward.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and have a positive start to the academic year!

## THIS MONTH'S WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH OFFER

- Mental Health Ambassador Training
- MHST Criteria and Referrals Training for Staff
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Assemblies

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

# BACK TO SCHOOL



Adapted from: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/blog/tips-for-dealing-with-back-to-school-anxiety/>

For some, the end of the summer holiday and a return to seeing friends each day can't come soon enough. But for others, just the thought of returning to the classroom can be daunting.



Here are some things to help with the transition and the return to school:

These tips can help you feel more in control and help to ease worries.

## GET INTO GOOD ROUTINES

Ensure you are getting enough sleep, exercise regularly, and eat a balanced diet to fuel your body and mind.

## WRITE DOWN SOMETHING YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO

## CHAT WITH SOMEONE ABOUT HOW YOU ARE FEELING

## GET ORGANISED

Check your timetable and organise your bag and your uniform the day before.

## One step at a Time

It's OK to feel worried or to not know how you are feeling about returning to school. It's normal to feel ups and downs, even throughout the day.



# WHAT IS A TRUSTED ADULT?

WRITTEN BY PARTICIPATION CHAMPION AZ



A trusted adult is someone who children and young people feel comfortable talking to about their lives in general, and about their problems/worries. The following are ways that you can become that person:

**Ask whether they want you to just listen to them and be understanding or if they want you to help them to come up with a solution.**

This can help the young person to feel that you are really listening to them as an individual, and can lead them to confide in you more in the future, and may even prompt them to encourage other children or young people to come to you, both to simply talk to you and devise solutions to their problems. This can help to establish your reputation as a trusted adult and help more young people to access you and other people that can help them to build a support network.

**Wear a Pride pin/badge**



This can help children and young people to feel more comfortable being themselves and expressing themselves in a way that is comfortable to them around you. Wearing a pride pin/badge shows young people that even though you may not be a member of the LGBTQ+ community yourself, that you will not judge them for it. This may encourage more young people to come to you with their problems, especially if they are related to their relationships or identity. Queer individuals often face stigma in their day to day lives that they may feel uncomfortable sharing with others. Therefore, wearing a pride pin/badge shows these young people that they can share this with you safely.

**Allow them to talk as much as they need**

This can help the young person to calm down about the situation that they are discussing with you and make them more receptive to devising solutions with you. This can help the young person to feel more positive about the situation and gain a sense of achievement from talking to you, and even if they can't or don't want to find a solution, they will often feel better after being allowed to just share their worries. Therefore, this will make children and young people feel comfortable around you much more quickly.

**Allowing them to talk and not interrupting them**

Something that seems obvious but is highly appreciated by young people. This again, helps them to feel that you are really listening to them and trying to understand them and their specific problems, making them feel more comfortable and cared for when talking to you.

**Wear a pin/badge with your pronouns on**



This shows young people that they are safe to be themselves around you and may prompt them to come out to you. This is a brave thing for any child or young person to do regardless of age and should always be met with kind words and support. If you are unsure of how to respond, it may help to thank the young person for sharing this information with you, and ask how they would like you to refer to them in different situations. For example, the young person may have only told you and not wish for this information to be shared with anyone else, or they may feel comfortable using certain pronouns in school but not at home. Therefore, it is both reassuring to the young person and an important step towards being a trusted adult to clarify this information with the young person if they do come out to you.



Taking these steps should encourage a wider variety of children and young people to view you as a trusted adult and feel comfortable confiding in you, and help them to feel more content in their school/intervention sessions. Additionally, becoming a trusted adult to more children and young people can lead to the development of a more positive environment, where more young people feel comfortable accessing the support that they need, both within services and in individual schools/colleges.

# BFRB AWARENESS WEEK

1<sup>ST</sup> - 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025



## WHAT ARE BFRBS?

Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviours (BFRBs) are defined by **The TLC Foundation for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviours** as *“any repetitive self-grooming behaviour that involves biting, pulling, picking, or scraping one’s own hair, skin, lips, cheeks, or nails that can lead to physical damage to the body and have been met with multiple attempts to stop or decrease the behaviour.”*

The two most common forms of BFRBs are **Trichotillomania** (hair pulling) and **Excoriation or Dermatillomania** (skin picking).

According to BFRB UK & Ireland, BFRBs affect approximately 4 million people in the UK.



[Click here](#) to watch an informative video about BFRBs.

For further information and support with BFRBs, visit the following websites:

<https://www.bfrb.org/>

<https://www.bfrbukireland.com/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/blog/my-coping-strategies-for-trichotillomania/>

<https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/about-mental-illness/mental-health-conditions/body-focused-repetitive-behaviours-bfrbs/>

*On the next page we explore ways to manage your BFRBs. For more information on this, please speak to your school’s allocated practitioner or visit the websites above.*



# BFRB AWARENESS WEEK

1<sup>ST</sup> - 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

## MANAGING BFRBs:

The first step to reducing BFRBs is to **bring your attention to the behaviours**. Many people will find that they engage in skin picking and hair pulling without conscious awareness, which can make it difficult to tackle.



Try using a diary to keep track of when the behaviours most often occur and notice any potential patterns or triggers e.g. do you pull your hair when your head is resting on your hand? Do you pick your skin when your hands are idle whilst watching TV?

Once you have a good understanding of when you engage in BFRBs you can start to introduce **competing responses** which are healthy alternatives that prevent engagement with BFRBs e.g. using a fidget toy to keep your hands busy. You might also think about some **preventative measures** such as keeping hands moisturized to prevent dry, flaking skin, or keeping your tweezers out of reach.



Here are some additional strategies you could try:

- Wear long sleeve tops, gloves, or a hat to decrease access to target areas.
- Avoid using magnifying mirrors.
- Engage in hobbies such as knitting, drawing, baking, or gardening to keep your hands busy.
- BFRBs often come with feelings of shame so try repeating positive affirmations to yourself to stop unkind thoughts in their tracks.
- Utilise relaxation and breathing strategies.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle to look after your hair, skin, and overall wellbeing e.g. eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- Apply Vaseline to your eyelids, eyelashes, and eyebrows to make it less appealing to pull your hairs.



# USING THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING TO IMPROVE OUR MENTAL HEALTH



**MENTAL**  
*health*  
**MATTERS**

Just as we're encouraged to eat at least five fruits and vegetables a day for our physical health, it's important to care for our mental health too.

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps adults and children can take to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things regularly could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well. It includes feeling positive, having a sense of purpose, belonging and being able to cope with problems and change.



When we return to work or school, life can feel overwhelming and busy, causing us to focus less on our wellbeing. The five ways to wellbeing are practical steps we can use to plan time to focus on feeling good and improving our mental health.

## THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING ARE:



TALK & LISTEN,  
BE THERE,  
FEEL CONNECTED



DO WHAT YOU CAN.  
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO.  
MOVE YOUR MOOD



REMEMBER  
THE SIMPLE  
THINGS THAT  
GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW  
EXPERIENCES.  
SEE OPPORTUNITIES.  
SURPRISE YOURSELF



Your time,  
your words,  
your presence



In each issue of our newsletter, we plan to focus on one of the five ways to wellbeing, sharing our top tips on ways you can take simple, practical steps to feeling good in order to have a positive impact on your wellbeing.

# THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

## BE ACTIVE



Life is busy. Constantly juggling work, family and everyday life can feel difficult. Often we spend so much of our time trying to spin lots of plates that it is easy to let exercise routines become less of a priority.

However, studies have shown that being active is not only great for your physical health but improves mental wellbeing too. It raises self-esteem as well as releasing hormones which improve your mood, it helps you to sleep better and can reduce feelings of stress, anxiety and racing thoughts.

**Be Active**



**CHECK OUT THESE**

**TOP  
TIPS**



**FOR HELPING YOU KEEP ACTIVE:**

Take part in an activity you enjoy. If you don't enjoy the activity you won't be motivated to do it.



Plan your activity ahead of time and add it to your diary as a reminder!

**BE  
ACTIVE**

**DO WHAT YOU CAN,  
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,  
MOVE YOUR MOOD**



Set yourself a fortnightly / monthly goal that is realistic and achievable, e.g.

"In September, I'm going to walk for 45 minutes, 3 times a week."

Exercising with a group can help you to stick to a routine. You could join a team / group, exercise with friends or your family.



**Karen (MHP)**

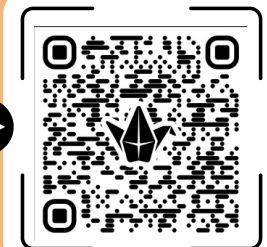


"Exercising for around 30 minutes on my treadmill makes me feel better, it helps to get rid of the day's stress and to keep up with my kids and complete the bigger walks I like to do!"



We would love to hear how you are getting on. Scan the QR Code, or click on the link to post an update on how you are keeping active to improve your wellbeing. Your update could motivate someone struggling or inspire someone to try something new!

We will share some of your achievements in our next issue!



**SCAN HERE!**

**CLICK HERE**



# PARENT WORKSHOPS



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

## 1 ANXIETY WORKSHOP

This workshop explores what anxiety is, where it comes from, and how it affects us. We will explore common symptoms of anxiety and consider how our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are connected. We will then share coping strategies and useful signposting to help parents support young people in managing their worries.

## 2 LOW MOOD WORKSHOP

This workshop aims to help parents understand the common symptoms of low mood, and the differences between low mood and depression. We will look at the 'vicious cycle of low mood' and consider what keeps low mood going. We will also explore how valued activities can improve mood, and top tips on general wellbeing.

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Location: The Meadows

10-11: Anxiety

1-2: Low Mood

3:30-4:30: Anxiety

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Location: Westleigh Family Hub

10-11: Anxiety

1-2: Low Mood

3:30-4:30: Anxiety

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Location: Clifton Street Family Hub

10-11: Anxiety

1-2: Low Mood

3-4: Anxiety

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Location: Formby Road, Atherton

10-11: Anxiety

1-2: Low Mood

3:30-4:30: Anxiety

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Location: Mornington Road, Hindley

10-11: Anxiety

1-2: Low Mood

3:30-4:30: Anxiety

# WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

## MENTAL HEALTH AMBASSADORS



### WHAT WE CAN HELP WITH

As part of the Whole School Approach offer, Wigan MHST can help schools to recruit and train a team of student Mental Health Ambassadors.

Your school's allocated practitioner will check-in with the ambassadors once a term to see how they are progressing with their goals.

### WHAT AMBASSADORS DO

- Giving their perspective on how mental health information can be shared helpfully with students, parents and staff.
- Working with school and MHST staff to develop whole school resources and initiatives towards mental health.
- Sharing ideas about how mental health conversations can be supported and normalised in school.

**Don't worry if you already have a team of mental health ambassadors, we can help them to reach their goals too.**



# EVENTS



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



10TH SEPTEMBER 2025

## WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY.

World Suicide Prevention Day is a powerful global observance held each year on 10th September, dedicated to raising awareness around suicide prevention and mental health support.

Samaritans are here to listen  
Call free day or night on 116 123

for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)

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26TH SEPTEMBER 2025

## NATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS' DAY

National Teaching Assistants' Day is held on the last Friday of September each year. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the hard work and efforts of TAs.



for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)

3RD OCTOBER 2025

## WORLD SMILE DAY

World Smile Day is a day dedicated to smiling and spreading random acts of kindness.

In 1963 Harvey Bell, an artist designed the smiley face emoji and in the late 1990s, Harvey decided that we should all set aside one day to simply smile and be kind towards each other, which is how World Smile Day came about.

for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)



OCTOBER 2025

## ADHD AWARENESS THE MANY FACES OF ADHD OCTOBER 2025

ADHD Awareness Month is dedicated to raising awareness of ADHD and offering support and community to those with ADHD. The main aims of ADHD Awareness Month is to address harmful stereotypes that surround ADHD diagnoses.

for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)

5TH OCTOBER 2025

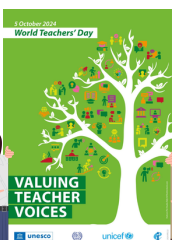
## WORLD TEACHER'S DAY

World Teacher's Day is a day dedicated to honouring and appreciating the contributions of educators worldwide.

Organised by UNESCO the day provides an opportunity to recognize the crucial role that all teachers play.

for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)



10TH OCTOBER 2025

## WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY



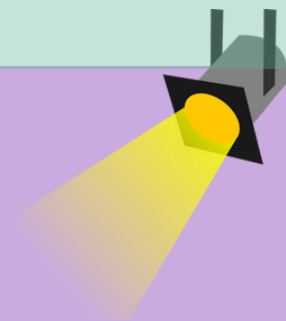
World Mental Health Day is an opportunity for us all to talk about mental health and consider how, together, we can help everyone have better mental health.

for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)



# SIGNPOSTING SPOTLIGHT



## THE NURTURING PROGRAMME

A 10-WEEK COURSE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT NURTURING, POSITIVE FAMILY TIME AND IS ESPECIALLY SUITED TO FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER OR PRIMARY-AGED CHILDREN, WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON LEARNING THROUGH PLAYING GAMES TOGETHER. 🎲🌱

WHERE? WIGAN & LEIGH FAMILY HUBS

TO RESERVE A PLACE CONTACT:  
[EARLYHELPDEVELOPMENTTEAM@WIGAN.GOV.UK](mailto:EARLYHELPDEVELOPMENTTEAM@WIGAN.GOV.UK)

### KEY THEMES

SELF-AWARENESS

EMPATHY

APPROPRIATE  
EXPECTATIONS

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

THE CENTRE FOR  
EMOTIONAL  
HEALTH

The Nurturing  
Programme

Information  
for Parents  
and Carers

How to get the best  
out of family life



## SPECTRUM GAMING

SPECTRUM GAMING IS AN AUTISTIC-LED UK BASED CHARITY THAT SUPPORTS AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE. THEY OFFER ONLINE SPACES FOR AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE TO CONNECT, ADVOCACY SUPPORT, TRAINING FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS AND FACE-TO-FACE MEET UPS TO PROVIDE AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE THE CHANCE TO MEET EACH OTHER AND UNDERTAKE POSITIVE ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.

SPECTRUM GAMING



**SPECTRUM GAMING**

## MAKING SPACE

CLICK THIS  
LINK TO VIEW  
THE  
WEBSITE

making  
space

16+

## MAKING SPACE

A FREE, NHS FUNDED STEP 2 COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL BASED THERAPY SERVICE, WORKING WITH ANYONE 16 OR OVER, WHO IS REGISTERED WITH A WIGAN GP AND IS EXPERIENCING COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES SUCH AS DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY.

HOW DO I ACCESS THE SERVICE? EMAIL:  
[MASP.WELLBEING@NHS.NET](mailto:MASP.WELLBEING@NHS.NET)  
CONTACT NUMBER: 01925 581755

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Five Ways to Wellbeing: Give to Others

Coping Strategies for the Festive Period

