

SGHS Counselling Service – Time2Talk

In step with our current and temporary new world and all its uncertainties, we are now more mindful than ever - of not only how important it is to preserve our own mental health but especially that of our young people, who we of course are all now in much closer proximity with and for very prolonged periods of time.

There are many online platforms that they can access, which offer online counselling and different avenues of support, from reputable organisations –

childline.org.uk youngminds.org.uk kooth.com

bigwhitewall.com -wheretotalk.org themix.org.uk

We as a school have been working hard to ensure that we can continue to offer a school counselling service to the young people during this unsettling time. We are adapting our usual working model in light of the government and Public Health England Guidance on Coronavirus, to endeavour to keep us all safe.

For those young people that we have been supporting prior to the school closure, we will be making contact via their emails and offering phone 'check-ins' via Teams, at allocated times with myself- if they were still keen for this to happen and with parental consent. Whilst friends and family can be a wonderful source of support and comfort (or indeed if this is not the case), it sometimes may be helpful to speak with someone outside of those four walls, that is not connected with their lives, but who is willing to listen and support and help navigate to find a new normal or whatever the young person's presenting issues may be .

Unlike my normal counselling sessions which may focus for example at the route of their anxiety/sadness, within ongoing sessions, it is my intention to really offer more of a solution focussed therapy - practical problem solving, assistance with present day issues, helping find a structure and a routine, addressing real fears, anxiety, getting sick, loneliness, building their own survival kit for mental wellbeing and the like.

Whilst the new format for the school counselling service will require parental consent, we would encourage you to talk with your child as to whether they wish to access this provision. The service will be confidential, unless I have any safeguarding concerns, then we will share them via the appropriate channels (immediate contact with parents and the school safeguarding Team). We will be asking for parental consent before any sessions can take place. If the young person wishes their referral to be anonymised at this time i.e. not let parents know that they are seeking support outside the family home, then I would suggest accessing one of the above organisations.

The long standing counselling provision at SGHS has never been a crisis support service and will continue to focus on the day to day – mild to moderate issues, stresses and strains that our young people face, especially at such an unprecedented, land mark time in their lives.

If you have any further questions or wish to access this service, please contact time2talk@sghs.org.uk and we will get back to you.

Mabel - the school therapy dog, is also trying to keep spirits up via her very own Instagram page! Please follow her @ mabels.tails with daily updates.

Anna McQuade
School / Relate Counsellor
MA, PGCE, BA(Hons)